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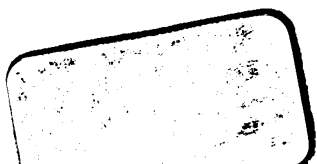
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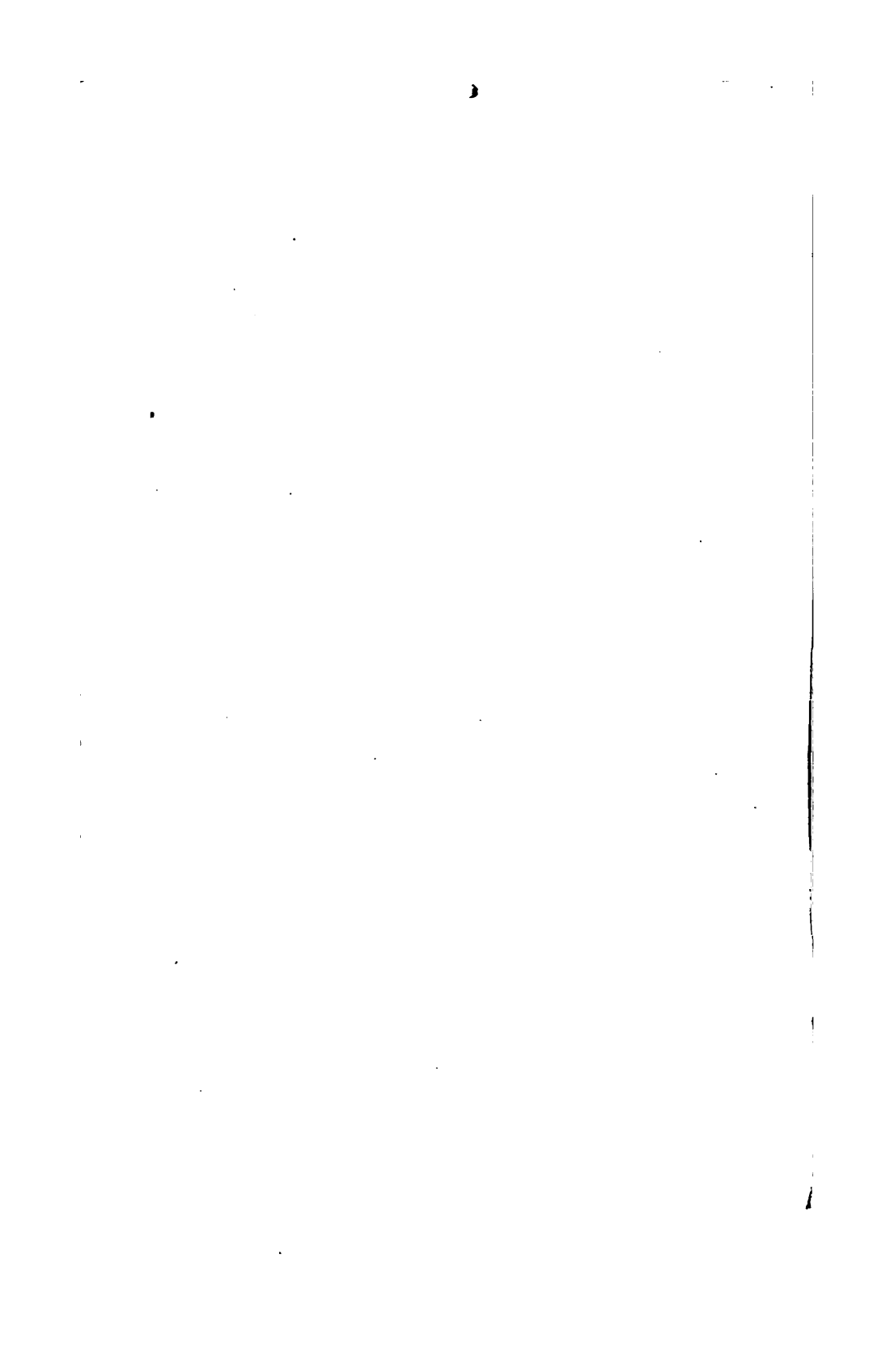
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INGLISTON.



INGLISTON.

BY GRACE WEBSTER.



“ Ἡ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα κατακαήσονται.”

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INGLISTON.

CHAPTER I.

“Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling.”

HUDIBRAS.

Every body must remember a rich eccentric baronet, by name Sir Norman Inglis, who possessed an immense extent of property in the west of Scotland. It was neither very rich land nor very well cultivated, but he drew a large income from its coal-fields, and he inherited, besides, the accumulated wealth of two unmarried elder brothers who had died abroad. Sir Norman also lived and died single. It was not because he had never contemplated marrying, but the interference of female relatives had frustrated his views and broken up his happiness, and, in so doing, laid the foundation of that unsociable life which he afterwards led. And these domestic tyrants were three maiden sisters who infested his mansion. But there is a point beyond which even good-natured imbecility cannot endure, and to that extreme they drove him, and he expelled them from his house; but the act was not ungenerously done, for he tripled their original portions, which were very slender, and thus gave them no plea for troubling him again.

A

A man who took so decisive and judicious a step, it may be thought, might have married whom he pleased. And so he would, but it was now too late. The object of his attachment was in her grave,—the grave to which his indecision had brought her. He was not, however, to be allowed to remain entirely free from female predominance. As soon as his sisters shifted their camp, it was the signal for his mother to take up her quarters with him. This old lady and her daughters never agreed together, so could not live under the same roof. To her it was, therefore, a happy day, when she heard of their dismissal from their brother's house, and she joyfully returned to preside once more as the mistress of the establishment at Ingliston.

Lady Grace Inglis was a personage of few faults, and not many virtues. She was a weak, pompous woman, full of dignified ideas about paltry concerns. She was, however, thoroughly domestic. She was the youngest daughter of a very poor nobleman, and, together with the rest of her family, whilst they were brought up with an undue estimation of their own importance in the world, was trained to habits of the most perfect economy. She was, therefore, well qualified to keep every thing in proper style and order in her son's house ; but, as she was inclined to be more anxious about his dignity than his comfort, he led a splendidly miserable life with her. She, however, was in her element. She never had been so happy before, nor had she ever met with so few things to discompose and ruffle her. All her arrangements she had brought to a state of perfection not to be equalled. Her servants, by her unwearied directions, had attained to that degree of faultless

exactness, which is peculiarly edifying and exemplary, and her son was docility itself. He never contradicted nor rebelled. In short, she had nothing to record in her journal, which she regularly kept from day to day, but the reformation she wrought in the family, and her own self-gratulations for the achievement. Lady Grace was not an intriguing or designing woman; and, when she had got every thing in this train, it was not at all natural that she would have liked to be supplanted in her authority. But still she had a scheme at heart, although not a selfish one. She had an eye to an advantageous marriage for her son, and there was a person in view who had got round her by flattery, and who would be nothing averse to the alliance herself. This young lady, Miss Diana Hamilton, was the only child of Sir James Hamilton, and heiress of his estates. But how Lady Grace, who was not quite devoid of common sense, could have imagined that her son, pliant as he was, could have been dragged into this arrangement, is altogether unaccountable. Miss Hamilton was not only plain and unpersonable, but much deformed; and these defects were nowise compensated by any amiableness of character and disposition, but the reverse. Her mind was as distorted as her body; and, as she could have no real admirers, for the credit of mankind be it told, that, notwithstanding her wealth, she never had an offer in her life.

But this young lady was not unsusceptible of the tender passion herself; nay, she had fallen in love repeatedly and desperately, and, in her particular case, it could not be hid, for it imparted to her manners a gentleness and complacency not natural to

them, and gave to her countenance a soft, smirking, smiling expression, indicative of inexplicable mental delight.

Sir Norman might have tolerated Miss Diana's long and frequent visits, if he had never begun to suspect any design upon himself. But, from the moment that his mother gave the hint as to what were her own wishes, and the expectations of the heiress, he could not endure the very sight of her, and he acted towards her with marked incivility.

The self-deluded mother, however, assured her protégée, that this was her son's way, and that he always behaved rudely to those whom he loved best ; and the young lady, who was fain to believe the truth of this, remained also under the same delusion. Lady Grace persisted in her repeated invitations to her favourite, and used to detain her as a guest from day to day, and from week to week, till she almost became a constant inmate at Ingliston. It was beyond Sir Norman's philosophy to submit to this, and one day, regardless of an exposure to other guests who were in the house, he actually refused to join the party at table, and remained in his own private apartments. This was passed over to the company by Lady Grace as some slight indisposition ; but next morning, to her no small consternation, when the hour of breakfast arrived, her son was not to be seen. In short, he was not in the house.

Lady Grace was a great woman for appearances, and she carried on the deceit to her guests by saying he was still indisposed, and went through her customary routine of morning duties, took her usual walk in the western avenue,—for she always walked for her health,—a full hour before luncheon, and sat

down to that meal with a tolerable appearance of ease and cordiality, although, in her own mind, she wished her friends away, that she might make a thorough search for her son. Her guests were not so devoid of penetration but that they saw through her attempts to appear happy and unconcerned. They suspected there was some uncomfortable family dissension at bottom, and they dropped away one by one, and Lady Grace made no effort to induce them to prolong their visit; but her favourite Miss Diana alone she detained, to comfort and assist her in her deliberations.

CHAPTER II.

"In vain she searched each cranny of the house."

GAY.

The house being cleared of strangers, Lady Grace forthwith convened her servants, viz. thirteen in number, and swore them all to secrecy on this important matter, and they all readily pledged their word; and the good lady, with a most charitable opinion of human nature as it exists in the lower orders, implicitly believed her secret safe in the keeping of a devil's dozen of men and women, who were bursting to let it out.

Every corner of the mansion was searched minutely by Lady Grace's maid, as if she had been seeking for a gem that had dropped from her mistress's jewel-box, Lady Grace herself superintend-

ing and directing the investigation. "But nought was awa' that could be missed," as was certified by Sir Norman's own man Keith, who was called upon to render his assistance in the survey, and who inspected, for his lady's satisfaction, his master's wardrobe, and read aloud the inventory thereof, which was in his possession; and he gave it as his decided opinion, that he could not be upon a visit, as he had not so much as taken a change of linen with him, nor a razor to shave with. "What a great mercy," exclaimed the lady's maid, "he cannot have cut his throat."

"Horrible and shocking!" ejaculated Lady Grace, "Sir Norman was a man of principle."

"To be sure he was," responded the abigail, "but when the wicked one is busy, my lady——" But the lady, incensed and shocked at the supposition, ordered her from her presence, and commanded dinner to be served up immediately, and returned to the company of her favourite Miss Hamilton. While those two ladies were ruminating upon what ought to be said and done on so distressing and perplexing an occasion, Lady Grace's confidants, the servants, were streaming abroad in all directions to circulate the story of their master's disappearance. My lady's own maid, Miss Tweedie, had gone down to the house of the wood-keeper, whose wife was her own cousin, and his son her own sweetheart, and told them what had happened in a dead secret. Sir Norman's own man had slipped up to the bothie where the old shepherd and his wife lived, and which stood on the brink of an exhausted slate-quarry, now a deep black pool of standing water,

and he went thither with the full resolution not to betray his trust. But in the course of conversation, out it came, together with a conjecture of his own which struck him at the moment. He said that he suspected some one was drowned in the quarry, he would not name the person that had committed the rash act, for he never was known to divulge a secret in his life ; but if Watty and his wife would take a look in the morning, and if they made any discovery, it might be something to their advantage if they kept it quiet.

Watty's wife crouching closer to the fire, and with real terror depicted in her countenance, declared she would not go out one step that night, even for a resting coal, and she took a nervous fit on the occasion, for she was subject to attacks of that sort. Their visitor, however, did not wait to offer restoratives, but hastened to depart after having broken up the comfort of the old couple for the night ; and Watty, although he boasted of being a courageous person, and ridiculed his helpmate for her weakness, took advantage of his company to the outside of the door to take a piece of coal from the bing, as his wife would not venture ; and Sir Norman's man, out of pure compassion for the two old unprotected creatures whom he had so unnecessarily disturbed and terrified, when he got Watty fairly outside the house, whispered to him in a tone meant to allay his terror, that he need not be the least afraid, for it was only his master that was amissing. This was the most astounding information the valet had yet given.

Had it been the herd-boy or the rat-catcher, or even the ground-officer, it would have been nothing

in comparison. But the apparition of Sir Norman Inglis, who, in Watty's estimation, was the most important of all personages, was to his imagination much more formidable than any plebeian ghost which might have haunted his dwelling; and shrinking back from the brink of the deep, black, motionless water, scarcely visible in the star-light, he uttered a shriek of terror, when, at the same moment, something from the opposite side of the quarry plashed heavily into the water, and the sound of a human voice was heard like an echo to his own. The awe-struck old man dropped the piece of fuel from his hand, and rushed into his cottage, leaving his officious visitor to wrestle with the supernatural powers that seemed to be astir. But Keith was not a coward.

He had no dread of spiritual assailants, and in his heart he did not believe that Sir Norman was drowned, although the thing was possible. It was the lack of something to do at home that had set him abroad upon a mischievous errand of idle gossip. The splash in the water, and the accompanying cry, excited his curiosity, but not his fear. It might only be some fragments of loose stone and earth which had given way and fallen down the precipice; but then the voice which seemed to reply to the old man's shriek was not so easily accounted for, and argued that some human agent was at work, so he hastened by a circuitous path leading through a thick fir wood, which sheltered the east side of the mansion-house, and he arrived at the opposite side of the quarry, directing his steps to the point from which he thought the noise proceeded, and as he went onwards he heard, or fancied he heard, a low

pitiful moaning, which, as he drew near, waxed louder and more loud, like the groans of one in deep distress; and in the darkness he stumbled over the body of a person that lay across the footpath. "I ask your pardon a thousand times, Sir," cried Keith in an accent of fear, and concern for his misdemeanour, as he raised in his arms to a sitting posture a figure wrapped in what felt like his master's camlet cloak. "Och! I am sick, I am sick," replied a voice in an agonizing tone of despair, while a most villanous decantation from a stomach overcharged with liquor beshowered, from his breast ruffles downwards, the unfortunate Keith's heretofore unsullied vestments.

"In the name of all that's beastly," cried he, "what is this?" While he threw from him the nauseous burden, which fell like a dead weight upon the ground.

"You've fairly killed me now, you hard-hearted man," muttered a reproachful voice, whose tipsy tones he discovered to be those of the head virago of Sir Norman's kitchen, and Keith responded with an anathema, and a spurn with his foot, while he resolved to proceed homewards and leave her to her fate. But a pitiful remonstrance from the intoxicated woman, and the certainty that the condition of his own outward man could not well be rendered more filthy than it already was, made him relent, and he propped up the great unwieldy woman on her feet, and forthwith led, or rather dragged, her along with him to the back entrance of the mansion-house.

Now Mrs MacMartin, this head-cook and house-keeper of Ingliston, might have been absent from

the house almost every night of the year without being missed, for Lady Grace seldom had any thing prepared for supper ; but, unfortunately, Sir Norman's factor Mr Stirling, and his clerk Mr Gowans, had arrived that night by the coach, which passed the porter's lodge at nine o'clock, and after a ride of nearly forty miles, they could not be sent to bed without some substantial refreshment. A couple of broiled chickens, and the cold round, together with a dish of minced collops, to suit the elder gentleman, who had no masticators, and a bottle of mulled port-wine, were ordered up. Every thing might have been had in a twinkling, but Mrs MacMartin had taken away the key of the larder. There was a delay made among the servants, in hopes that she would speedily return ; while Lady Grace continued ringing the bell, and demanding why supper was not served, and no one dared to apprise her of the fact of the cook's absence, but a series of messages, commands, and excuses, were conveyed to and fro between the supper-room and the kitchen. But, notwithstanding all this negotiation, and the reiterated orders which were issued by Lady Grace, and the assurances of prompt attention to them, the viands were not forthcoming, and she, with her friend Miss Diana, sat a painful hour and a half with Mr Stirling, conversing at cross purposes, and endeavouring to evade Mr Stirling's manifold inquiries regarding Sir Norman, whom he had come to see on particular business. But when the delay was becoming insupportable to all parties, and it was no longer possible to drag out the conversation, and the unlucky wight whose office it was to answer her ladyship's bell had exhausted all his subterfuges and apologies,

supper was served up ; but it did not consist of what Lady Grace had ordered, except the mulled wine. Its accompaniment was an immense smoking shin of beef boiled to rags, which had been put on for soup for the next day's luncheon.

Lady Grace's rage could not be restrained ; she ordered the meat off the table, and ordered the man to quit her service, and called upon Mr Stirling, as a lawyer, to witness the transaction. Mr Stirling did not dare to dissent from her ladyship, but only ventured a humble suggestion that he and Mr Gowans were not particular, and that a morsel of cheese or any thing would be quite sufficient.

"Can *you*, Mr Stirling," cried the enraged lady, "can *you* pay Marshall his wages, for he shall not be another night in this house ?"

Mr Stirling was cautiously preparing an answer, so as not to involve himself, when Marshall was driven to the necessity of telling the truth regarding Mrs MacMartin's absence, in order both to preserve his own character and retain his place.

CHAPTER III.

"For brevity is very good
When w' are, or are not understood."
HUDIBRAS.

When Marshall descended to the under story, and was proceeding along the stone-passage, bearing in his hand the rejected dish of *bouilli*, he met in the

teeth Keith and his companion entering the house. The former, probably ashamed of the predicament in which he was seen when he came within the glare of the passage-lamp, which hung above the back entrance-door, withdrew precipitately his support from the unfortunate Mrs MacMartin, and unceremoniously pushed her on before him ; but she, unable to balance herself, fell at full length upon the flags. Now congregated all the male and female attendants of the mansion to see what was the matter. Lady Grace's own woman, who had been strolling for a full hour about the shrubberies, with the wood-keeper's son, came first and foremost to satisfy her curiosity. Then the clamour of voices began : fifty questions were asked, which could not be answered. Marshall, and the others who had to give their attendance up stairs, called to Mrs MacMartin to get upon her legs and give out the supper, and they poured forth a torrent of abuse upon her for her absence, while each twang of the supper-room bell, which dangled above their heads, sounded like a fire-alarm, and might have aroused the drunk woman from her stupor, but she seemed as insensible as the stones she lay upon, till two of the party, more compassionate than the rest, to-wit, the kitchen-maid and the woman who milked the cows, took pity on her deplorable condition ; and not being so squeamish as the dressed up dames and footmen, who would not befoul so much as a finger to render assistance, carried, or rather trailed, her along the passage, and lodged her in her own apartment, and ultimately in bed.

Meantime, Marshall, with all speed, hastened to

the supper-room joyfully to impart the tidings that Mrs MacMartin was returned, and that supper would be up in no time. And this he did rather with precipitation, for the key in question was yet to be searched for about the cook's person, and this search her two humane attendants proceeded to make as they undressed her, and it was found in her left pocket, made of moleskin, a fathom down, amidst all the orra things that had been collected in that deep depository for the bygone half-year. Lady Grace's maid, who stood with evident gratification to inspect the disrobing, although she did not offer a helping hand, could not restrain her curiosity when she saw a letter drop from Mrs MacMartin's bosom, while they were in the act of pulling off her gown, and she stepped briskly forward to pick it up. It was directed to Lady Grace Inglis, in the handwriting of Sir Norman, and sealed with his seal, as she called her fellow-servants both in kitchen and hall to witness; and she skipped about with impatience, and could rest in no place, but wished a hundred times that that tiresome Mr Stirling would retire to his room, that she might communicate this event to her mistress.

The ladies at length, after having seen the two travellers supplied with a superabundant repast, left them to their punch, and Miss Tweedie was summoned to attend Lady Grace in her dressing-room. The circumstance of the letter, which was evidently from her son, took Lady Grace's attention off from the delinquent in whose custody it was found, and whom she had meant to summon *instantly* to her presence, and dismiss from her service for her breach of duty in leaving the house without permission.

She examined the epistle on all sides ; it was dirty, and smelt as if it had been soaked in whisky. Lady Grace screwed up her features. She did not tear it open with the impatience which maternal anxiety might have dictated, but she held it, as a thing polluted, between the tips of her forefinger and thumb, while she inspected through an eye-glass the superscription and seal, till she ascertained, without a doubt, that they were Sir Norman's.

" Here, my dear Diana," cried she, " I am so nervous at sight of this, that I have not strength to open it. Read it for me, if you please. Tweedie, you may retire till I call you." Miss Diana took the letter, which she could most fervently have pressed to her lips, notwithstanding its ill savour. She opened it with a deep sigh, and began to read it in a solemn sentimental tone.

" My Dear Mother,—for so I am in duty bound to address you, although you have acted in many respects not like a parent to *me*. And I hereby declare, that I am not to be trepanned by that crooked machine, Miss Diana Hamilton, whom you persist in keeping in the house, and thereby forcing me to absent myself"—Unable to proceed farther, Miss Diana uttered a hysterical sob of passion, tore the letter in a thousand pieces, looked like an incensed fury ; and as she staggered towards a chair, she sunk down on the floor, apparently in a swoon. Lady Grace called in her maid, who hastened to unlace her. She had taken a violent nervous fit. She seemed in an alarming state, and the attendant made every effort to compose her, while Lady Grace, more anxious about her son's fate, gathered up all the

fragments of his letter, but was obliged to give up in despair the impracticable task she had essayed of putting them together, so as to be able to decipher it. She began to repent her friendship for Miss Hamilton ; but it was now too late.

CHAPTER IV.

" The law that settles all you do."

HUDIBRAS.

At the end of our last brief chapter, we left Miss Diana sprawling, and kicking, and screaming, and sobbing on the floor, and uttering incoherent exclamations that she was ruined and undone.

Miss Tweedie could not succeed in pacifying her, so with other assistance she bore her off to bed, while the rejected damsel screamed to Lady Grace for the love of Heaven to let her have the carriage and drive home that night. This mad-like proposal was overruled by the old lady, who, however, gave her her hearty promise that she would allow her to depart as early as she pleased next morning ; but when morning came, Miss Diana, who had tossed and tumbled all night, was so indisposed that she was unable to make her appearance ; and being in a very feverish state, Lady Grace thought it incumbent on her to send for the family surgeon.

Lady Grace's next concern, for she neglected no part of her duty, was to summon Mrs MacMartin to

her presence to answer for her conduct. Her ladyship, to give due dignity and effect to the scene, repaired to the principal drawing-room, attended by Mr Stirling and Mr Gowans. She had found it impossible to manage matters without enlisting the former of these gentlemen in her confidence regarding Sir Norman's absence, and he was an old staunch friend of the family, a long-headed cautious man whose word was never heard in any one's affairs; and he assured Lady Grace that his clerk, Mr Gowans, who was also his nephew, was worthy of equal confidence with himself, in every respect, and might safely be intrusted in the matter; and the young man's appearance and manner did not belie the high character his master gave of him. He was none of your impudent whipper-snappers, designated writers' clerks, but a staid, sedate-looking, not ungentlemanly youth of twenty, with a comely countenance, the picture of goodness. Robust health shone out in the pure red and white of his complexion, and the whole of his pleasing exterior was improved by a modest, unassuming, but not awkward deportment. This young man took the station allotted him on this important occasion at a side-table, with his paper and ink-horn in readiness to take minutes. Lady Grace was seated on a circular ottoman of ruby-coloured embroidered velvet in the middle of the room; while Mr Stirling, a tall, gaunt, toothless old man, with yellow hair, or rather a yellow wig, walked to and fro, bearing in his countenance an expression of serious thought, fit for a question of life and death.

Lady Grace's intention was to dismiss the offend-

ers immediately without board-wages, for she did not doubt their inability to exculpate themselves; and she was not without hopes that it might be proved they had even forfeited their right to any remuneration whatever for their services since the foregoing term. Mr Stirling was anxious in his own mind to prevent such harsh proceedings; but he was not prepared to say how that could be effected, without appearing to dissent from her ladyship, till he heard what the culprits had to say for themselves. Sir Norman's man Keith, and Mrs MacMartin, were forthwith called up. The former entered first, and casting a look which might be meant for one of conscious innocence, but which was in reality an expression of defiance and contempt directed towards the lawyer and his clerk, took his station near the door, with his left arm a-kimbo; while poor Mrs MacMartin stood humbly at his side, the picture of dejection and despair, her limbs almost sinking under her, while her whole frame trembled, but it was not with fear, for the sunken eyes, the wretched, haggard countenance, and other concomitants, proved to the beholders that she was suffering, from her excesses of the previous night, all the discomfort and misery arising from such circumstances; and she had been that moment dragged out of bed to appear before the tribunal of her merciless mistress. The rest of the servants were assembled at the door to be called in as witnesses, as occasion required.

"Now, Mr Stirling," said Lady Grace, in her high grand tone of voice, "I leave it to you to ascertain why these two, without leave asked or given, took

it upon them to be absent last night, when I most especially and particularly required their services?"

Mr Stirling proceeded with his investigation. Keith, who felt all the insolence of imagined innocence, answered to the interrogatories which were put to him, that he was the servant of Sir Norman Inglis, and would answer to him for his conduct.

"Mark down that, Gowans," said the lawyer, assuming a severer aspect. "You must remember, young man," continued he, "that it was I myself who engaged you to Sir Norman's service. I recommended you to this family, and, in so doing, I became caution for your good behaviour. I do not say that I will take it upon me to discharge you from Sir Norman's service; but I have it in my power to report to him the insolence of your conduct, and, if he retains you after that, I must regard it as a personal affront to me." Keith seemed calmed by this appeal to his better feelings, and, with something of a humbled air, he replied,—

"As I have done no wrong, sir, I may tell you the truth. I heard last night a noise in the planting, and, as was natural, went to see what it was, and there I found Mrs MacMartin, who had met with an accident. How it happened, she can tell you herself, as I am in none of her secrets, and never interfere with any thing but my own duties in my master's service."

"And a woful accident it has been to me, my lady," whined Mrs MacMartin, in a tone which might have drawn pity from a whinstone. "It has given me my death, I'm certain. Oh that ugly fir-root, as thick as my leg, that grows up athwart the road! I

fell all my length across it, and it was a merciful providence that I did not play clash into the quarry, for I was upon its very brink."

"But what took you out to the quarry at that time of night?" said Mr Stirling, motioning to his clerk to note her answer.

"Indeed, sir," replied Mrs MacMartin, summoning more courage as she proceeded, "a very simple errand took me out. As I had run short of tea and sugar, and some other little things besides, I thought it could be no fault, when the throng of the day was by, to go east to the village, to Mrs Adie's, to buy what I required."

"And you intoxicated yourself there?" said Lady Grace, unable longer to remain silent.

"The Lord forgi'e your ladyship for saying so," cried Mrs MacMartin, shocked at the impeachment. "No, no, my lady," continued she, "I intoxicated none of myself, I'll assure you, as Mr Keith can testify. I only drank a strong dish of tea at Mrs Adie's; for there had been a christening in the house, and she had some company, and strong tea never, at no time, sits on my stomach, so it made me throw most extraordinar'; and Mrs Adie gave me like little better than two tea-spoonfuls out of her rum-bottle, and after that I could have drunk the ocean with drouth, and I begged, for mercy's sake, for a drink of clean water, but she, in her kindness, gave me black beer. Och, the unlucky night that I ever put such a thing to my lips."

"By your own confession, then," said Mr Stirling, "you took tea, rum, and black beer. And what purchases did you make at the village?"

"Aye, sir," replied Mrs MacMartin, "that's the

bit that's to my cost. It's been a dear night to me. Oh that unlucky tree-root !"

And hereupon, she enumerated distinctly all the purchases she had made for herself and some of the other servants, all which she declared were safely deposited in her small covered basket that she used on these occasions, but basket and all had disappeared.

The fact was, that, when she fell, it had started out of her hand, and had plunged, with its valuable contents, into the deep quarry pool.

"And how came you," said Mr Stirling, cutting short her statement, "How came you in possession of a certain letter, which was found about your person after you came home ?"

To this inquiry, Mrs MacMartin could return no answer. Not that she wished to make any concealment about it ; but she had not the slightest recollection that such a thing had ever been in her custody. The truth is, the hours of her revels at the village the night before were now a complete blank in her memory, and it was in vain for her to endeavour to recall what had passed ; and she was only able to enumerate the articles which she affirmed were in her basket, from a previous recollection of what she, when in her sober senses, had intended to purchase when she set out upon her unlucky errand. Mr Stirling proceeded to cross-question her, hoping that it might bring to her recollection some transaction regarding the letter. But the convocation was broken up by the rattling of carriage-wheels over the gravel ; and, ere Keith and the cook could effect their retreat from the presence-chamber, Lady Weirham and her daughters were ushered in, and, in the

rear, followed the contents of another vehicle, viz. the two Misses Maclashan, Miss Storie, and the Misses Crabbe.

Lady Grace very simply imagined, that this visit of her neighbours was a sure sign that they knew nothing of what had taken place at Ingliston ; and this belief so far reconciled her to the untimely interruption, that she gave them a kind welcome. But the truth of the matter was, Lady Grace was never more deceived in her life ; for it was sheer, 'gossiping, intermeddling curiosity, that had brought the whole bevy. The Miss Crabbes, the Miss Maclashans, and Miss Storie, spinsters, upon small incomes, were located near the village in pleasant, picturesque, retired dwellings ; and, as they each and all could claim some propinquity to one or other of the neighbouring families of distinction, they were in the habit of exchanging visits with the most of the gentry in those parts.

By dawn of day that morning, there had been in circulation through the village the most strange, incoherent, and bloody fiction regarding Sir Norman that ever was invented. It owed its authorship originally to his own cook, but in the course of its progress from house to house, it gained so many additions, that from the very absurdity and inconsistency of the detail, it would have seemed to any one unworthy of credit. The earliest intimation of it was received by the several domestics of the Miss Maclashans, Miss Storie, and the Miss Crabbes, and reported verbatim to their ladies ; and these distinguished newsmongers lost not a twinkling in clubbing together in Miss Storie's parlour to discuss the subject, and decide upon the probability of the re-

port. That Sir Norman had stabbed Miss Diana Hamilton with a carving knife at dinner might be true, and they had no doubt of it, for Sir Norman hated Miss Diana every body knew that, and he was an eccentric man, with a bee, they were sure, in his bonnet, although Mrs Irving, the clergyman's wife, would not allow it to be said, but *she* was no judge, although a well meaning body. And what could she be expected to know? She had seen nothing. Her father was only a Latin master of the Glasgow High School. She probably had never been in company with a baronet in her life except Sir Norman, and she would very naturally think that a man of his rank must be a man of sense. But to return from Mrs Irving's character to Sir Norman's exploits. It was highly probable, in their opinion, for so they conjectured, that he had committed or attempted this bloody murder upon the body of Miss Diana. It was still more probable what was stated, that he afterwards went up to his own room and hanged himself. That was just like Sir Norman. He was a man that never could have submitted to be brought to public justice. His pride was insufferable. His mother had herself to blame for that, and indeed his father, honest man, who, upon the whole, was not a bad neighbour, and had always been kind to *them*, was as proud as Lucifer himself. And, poor man, now that he was gone, he had little to be proud of. His sister went astray with her own coachman; his sons, who died abroad, were but wild living young men, and he himself, some years before his death, was as uncomely a sight as could be seen, with a tumour on the side of his head, brought on, it was said, by a blow with a battledore

from Lady Grace. But the concluding act of the tragedy, as reported to them, these confidential friends and confederates could not so easily receive as credible, but they were unwilling to abate any thing of the truth of the statement. It was affirmed that after Sir Norman hanged himself in his own room, he had been seen taking his departure bodily from the house, and Lady Grace was almost deranged. There was little wonder, and she had caused the ponds to be dragged for her son's body, but to no purpose; and it was thought the poor woman would end her days in a mad-house, which they, to-wit, these sympathising female counsellors, would not have been surprised at even though all this had not happened, for, if they recollected right, there was a touch of insanity in the family, and she herself had a particular look with her eye; and they called to mind that her uncle had been a man of strange fancies, and they had been told that he went quite beside himself with religion. Religion, they agreed was a good thing in its own place, but oh! when people went too far with religion, it did much harm both to it and to themselves. Thus moralized the Miss Maclashans, Miss Storie, and the Miss Crabbes.

CHAPTER V.

“ And if that any ill she heard of any,
She would it eke, and make it worse by telling,
And take great joy to publish it to many,
That every matter worse was for her melling,
Her name was hight Detraction.”

SPENCER.

These five notable spinsters having descanted for at least three hours on the fate of Sir Norman, trying, at the same time, to reconcile every irreconcilable part of the statement, and when they were like to be baffled in the attempt, they came to the conclusion that it was of no use to believe all that was said by the country people, who were so fond of the marvellous; they found that they could not rest satisfied till they had come to the truth of the story, which was but natural, considering the good terms they always had been on with the family, and the *respect* they had for all the members of it. They were sensible that they were out of their duty in not having called on Lady Grace long before, but they had always delayed, expecting to get a drive in the carriage of some neighbour who might be going that way. And now, as the day was fine, they came to the agreement to delay no longer from economical motives, but to hire among the whole party a post-chaise from the village, and go in a body to pay their respects at Ingliston.

How they could all be stowed in a vehicle which only held three was a consideration, and none was willing to be left at home. But Miss Joanna Mac-lashan consented, being the least of the group, to sit on a foot-stool, which she preferred to her sister's knee; and Miss Patricia Crabbe mounted the box beside the post-boy, as riding inside a carriage, very fortunately, always disagreed with her.

Such motives as have been stated actuated this party to call on Lady Grace, and the other visitors to whom brief allusion has been made, viz. Lady Weirham and two of her daughters, came to Ingliston for much the same reasons.

They had heard some flying reports about Sir Norman, but it was from a higher source. Weirham Castle was situated at least six miles to the eastward of the village, so none of the marvellous statements in circulation there had as yet reached it. But some of the recent visitors at Ingliston had taken Weirham Castle on their way home, and had given a hint of some breach between Sir Norman and his mother—some family disagreement likely to be serious; and a hint was sufficient for Lady Weirham, who was determined to search the affair to the bottom. And she hoped, on paying a visit, to find matters as bad as possible; in short, to find that the breach between the mother and the son was irreparable. What Lady Weirham could gain by the fulfilment of such a malevolent wish, it is impossible to divine. It could not be altogether the pure love of mischief. There must be some other actuating principle in a woman's breast when she cherishes an ill wish. Lady Weirham perhaps thought that if Sir Norman expelled his mother, as

he had done his sisters, one of her daughters might have a chance of heading the establishment. She had three of them to dispose of, the eldest of whom had attained her thirty-ninth year, and although she always affected to despise and ridicule Sir Norman, it would have been the happiest achievement she had ever accomplished, considering that Lord Weirham had exhausted his estates by his fruitless speculations, if she had got one of her unportioned girls installed, lady of Ingliston.

Such were the feelings and speculations of Lady Weirham on entering the drawing-room at Ingliston ; but it was no small disappointment to her to find Lady Grace seated there, in her own dignified formal way, as if nothing had happened.

Lady Weirham, with all the effrontery that sometimes accompanies high rank, but none of the dignity which ought to attach to it, pertinaciously and perseveringly made Sir Norman the subject of her discourse. His trees, his improvements, his conduct at the late election, his taste in books, his improved personal appearance, indicative of his improved health, were successively the subjects of her high encomiums. When was he to come and spend a week at Weirham Castle ? Lord Weirham was longing to have a quiet week with him, to talk over their old stories, and discuss the new politics ; and Lady Grace, who sat with a palpitating heart listening to her discourse, was at length driven to the desperate expedient of saying in reply to the unmannerly inquiries which her visitor persisted in making, that her son was from home, and that she had a letter from him last night, but he did not say what day he would be back ; but she was sure Weirham

Castle was the first place he would visit on his return.

Lady Grace was not often happy in her attempts to deceive, but this answer was eminently successful, and had a wonderful effect upon the company. Lady Weirham's flow of spirits seemed to cease ; she was foiled and disappointed, while she attempted to express her delight at the prospect of a visit, and even went so far as to say that as Lord Weirham would entirely monopolize Sir Norman to himself, she would consider it no compliment to her, unless Lady Grace accompanied him.

Meanwhile, the Miss Maclashans, Miss Storie, and the Miss Crabbes, who were as impudent as bantams upon their own dunghill, and could have talked down the King and the Commonwealth, sat silent, with greedy ears, listening to the conversation, and nothing was lost upon them. They had not failed to observe the presence of Mr Stirling, who was still in the room, and of his clerk, with his ink-horn and scroll of paper, who slipped out on their entrance, and their five pair of eyes met ; and the same thought struck them all simultaneously, as they afterwards found on comparing notes : and their conjecture was this,—that the man of business, Mr Stirling, who was a cunning hand, and who, they remembered, could never give a right account of the money that was subscribed for a chapel of ease, in the parish of Stonedyke, of which he was the treasurer, had come to concoct, together with Lady Grace, a story to deceive the public regarding Sir Norman's fate, which they did not as yet doubt had been a tragical one, and they could not but admire Lady Grace's composure ; but when she promised,

in her son's name, a visit to Weirham Castle, and mentioned having had a letter from him the night before, their ten eyes again met, but their thoughts were unutterable.

To pay for a post-chaise to come so far, and learn nothing, was truly mortifying, but there was no help for it; but, as they had not that charity in them which thinketh no evil, they could not allow themselves to believe that there was nothing to learn: so, when the Weirhams took their leave, they reluctantly departed also; but, oh, their unlucky stars, that they had not waited a few minutes longer, and then some mystery might have been unravelled to them, for just as they were driving down the avenue, Dr Medwyn, with all speed, rode past.

This was a strange coincidence; the family doctor and the lawyer convened. This could not be by chance. They, therefore, as the last forlorn hope of gaining information, caused the driver to halt at the porter's lodge a sufficient length of time, to allow them to make the inquiries they were most anxious to have answered. But, alas! they were baffled in their attempt. An old Highland woman, as deaf as a door, acted on that occasion as portress, and could only speak Gaelic, so she could give no intelligible answer to their manifold interrogations, and they were forced to proceed homewards, having gained nothing by the expedition, except that Miss Patricia Crabbe got the lumbago with being exalted on the driver's seat, and Miss Joanna Maclashan got a stiff-neck with her seat on the footstool, at the open windows of the chaise.

CHAPTER VI.

" In peals of thunder now she roars, and now
She gently whimpers like a lowing cow ;
Yet lovely in her sorrow still appears,
Her locks dishevelled, and her flood of tears,
Seem like the lofty barn of some rich swain,
When, from the thatch, drips fast a shower of rain."

GAY.

When Dr Medwyn saw Miss Hamilton, it was his opinion, that there was nothing serious, but merely a slight nervous attack, which a day or two's composure would remove, and then, perhaps, a little change of scene would be of use to her.

That she might get her sent home to her friends without delay, was what Lady Grace most ardently wished, for she was experiencing in her own heart all the contrition of a child who has done wrong, and is never convinced of it till smarting under the infliction of punishment ; and it was now all her desire to get free of her favourite Miss Diana, and to find out her son's hiding-place, that she might entreat his return to his home, from which her folly had driven him, and she longed to assure him that he never again should have occasion to find fault with her for obtruding any one upon his society.

Mr Stirling, to whom she had confided her thoughts, gave her every encouragement to hope, from his knowledge of Sir Norman's temperament, that there was no danger of him committing any rash act. He was of opinion that if Miss Hamilton were removed, he would soon make his appearance ; and he promised, with the aid of his nephew, privately to make every inquiry to find out his retreat :

and before quitting Ingliston, he went through a second examination of Mrs MacMartin, to bring to her recollection, if possible, from whom she had received the letter, but without success.

He also advised Lady Grace to pass over for the present the delinquencies of her servants ; as to bring new ones to the house, under existing circumstances, would be a most injudicious step. Lady Grace did not cordially approve of this advice, but she submitted to it from necessity, and now directed her efforts to getting rid of Miss Diana. In her own mind, she had allotted Miss Hamilton two days to recruit, so as to be able to take her journey homewards ; and, on the third, she proposed to send her away, and, if necessary, to accompany her herself, so that there might appear nothing lacking of kindness and attention on her part, till she was fairly out of her charge. But Lady Grace's plan was overthrown ; for, to her unutterable dismay, instead of recovering, Miss Diana daily grew worse, much to the astonishment of Dr Medwyn, who always, when he saw her, pronounced her to be quite well ; but the accounts which her attendants gave of her state, after he was gone, were quite appalling. She was so frantic and unreasonable in her conduct and conversation, that she terrified the women, who were obliged to sit up with her during the night, till at length Miss Tweedie, and after her all of the other servants, one by one, actually refused their attendance.

The whole house was in a ferment. Lady Grace knew not what to do. She thought of the expediency of sending to acquaint Miss Hamilton's friends ; but the fear of causing any unnecessary alarm, or bringing blame upon herself, deterred her.

She hoped, day after day, that a change to the better would take place. Dr Medwyn did not seem alarmed, which was one comfort. But Miss Diana's complaint did not abate. The lady's maid, the housemaids, the laundry-maids, &c. were peremptory in their refusal to attend her through the night, all of whom had taken a trial of it in turn. But she took so many nervous tremors and wild fancies, that it was impossible to leave her alone. Lady Grace humanely tried a night of attendance herself; but, of all fearfully bad nights, that was the worst. After sinking so low, as if every pulse had ceased to beat, and the extinction of life seemed at hand, she reared up into one of her highest ecstasies, acting and uttering most terrific things. Lady Grace became nervous herself. She had been frightened nearly out of her senses, and by midnight she had the whole house rung up to assist her. By break of day, she despatched a man and horse for the doctor. The doctor was not at home, but seven miles distant, attending Mrs L—— in her first confinement. But the case was so urgent, that it would admit of no delay, and the young man who kept Dr Medwyn's shop, although little used to making professional visits, was compelled to accompany the Ingliston messenger. This lad, a raw, awkward, red-haired, ungainly youth of nineteen, was speedily introduced to Miss Diana, but her case completely baffled the young practitioner. He stood aghast with infinite horror and amazement, when he saw the uncomely young woman lying in bed with her hands clasped, her lips as white as chalk and quivering, her eyes turned up to the roof of the bed, and uttering rapidly the most agonizing exclamations of despair, and complaints of

bodily suffering. He never was so perplexed in his life. There was to him, who was so complete a novice, something awe-inspiring in the rank of the parties who had called him ; and he felt a terrible weight of responsibility, which truly distressed him. He had learned to make up the drugs in his master's laboratory, but he had not yet commenced his medical studies. He, however, strove to do his best on this emergency. He approached with manifest fear and trembling, and proceeded to examine Miss Diana's pulse and her tongue, while he inquired, in a powerful Aberdeen accent, if she had any pain ?

" Yes, pain !" cried the patient, " the most excruciating, intolerable, agonizing pain."

" And phatna pairt is the pain ?" was the next inquiry.

" Pain !" again exclaimed Miss Diana in a hysterical voice, and trying to work herself up to a frenzy, " It is from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and to the very points of my fingers. Oh, sir ! if you have any compassion, give me something to put an end to my sufferings."

" I darena' do that," replied the young man with great simplicity. " But maybe there might be something in our shop that would do you good. Is there any thing you would like, Mem ? or that you think you would be the better of ?"

" Nothing, nothing," cried she, " under the blessed sun will do me good. I am past all cure : I am in torture. Oh, is there nothing that would shorten this agony ?" And Miss Hamilton put her hand upon her breast while she spoke, and the distortions of her countenance indicated that she was suffering intolerable pain. " Is that the bit phere the pain is

worst?" inquired the young medical adviser with serious concern, and really anxious to find out the complaint, that he might suggest a remedy; and he ventured, as he spoke, to put his hand gently upon Miss Diana's bosom, where she seemed to point that the pain was most intense. "That's the epigastric region, Mem," added he. "Something must have disagreed with your stomach."

"Impossible," cried the patient. "I have not tasted food for a week."

"Then, Mem," persisted the young professor of medicine, "I'll lay ye a wager it is wind on the stomach, and that is a very ill thing. You should take something solid."

Here Lady Grace, who had just entered the room, interposed, and, by way of giving some insight into the nature of the case, explained to the young gentleman, whose skill and competence for the duty imposed upon him, as the assistant of her infallible Dr Medwyn, she had no doubts of, that Miss Hamilton's complaint was one of debility; that she was of a weakly constitution, although her general health was good; and, in the present instance, she believed it was just what Dr Medwyn had said, mere nervous weakness that was the matter with her; not dangerous, she hoped, although very alarming, and that strengthening remedies, she understood, were necessary. Thus enlightened on the subject, Mr Forsyth proceeded with his prescription.

"Phat would you think, then, my lady, of putting on a strengthening plaster?" said he. "It's a fine thing, and much recommended. We sell hundreds of them in our shop. And she might also take

some barks. But I think the plaster might be tried first if you have no objections, my lady."

"Objections I can have none," said Lady Grace emphatically. "I leave it entirely to *you*, and for Heaven's sake let something be given that will produce a quieter night than we had last. Would you not think a sleeping draught advisable?"

"I wouldna like to meddle with that," replied Mr Forsyth. "The doctor never allows that but by his own order. But I think if the plaster is tried first, it will have a great effect, as it answers mostly for every thing; and let it just be put upon the chest above the epigastric region, my lady, where she feels the greatest pain."

"You can explain all that to my maid," said Lady Grace, waving her hand in a dignified manner to Miss Tweedie, and walking out of the sick chamber. After he had given due directions to Miss Tweedie, he took his departure, accompanied by a servant to fetch the plaster, and in a couple of hours the messenger returned with Mr Forsyth's catholicon.

The whole family being worn out with the vigils they had been obliged to keep the night before, every one dreaded the approach of evening, and who should sit up with Miss Hamilton that night became a serious question among the women-servants, and each determined to refuse. At length Mrs MacMartin, who remained the only neutral person in these deliberations, interposed. She had never been appointed to the honourable post of nursing Miss Diana, and this she considered no trifling mark of disrespect. Lady Grace had never countenanced

her since her misdemeanour, and therefore could not think of honouring her with that office. But instead of resenting the affront with any sullenness of temper, she volunteered her services, assuring her fellow-servants that she was a capital sick-nurse, and could manage the young lady, and make her as quiet as a lamb. This assertion was rather incredulously received, but as the whole tribe of them were happy to get the burden off their own shoulders, they started no doubts. Mrs MacMartin, however, would not condescend herself to ask her mistress's permission, but Miss Tweedie undertook to obtain leave.

Lady Grace, whose mind and frame were worn out with fatigue, had already retired to repose. When Miss Tweedie entered her apartment, she found that she had fallen into a gentle slumber, and not daring to disturb her, there was no other alternative than that Mrs MacMartin, who was the only willing person, should prepare herself for her station by Miss Diana's bed.

Miss Hamilton, since her illness, had turned the night into day. She generally dozed in the afternoon and early part of the evening, and then, when other people were ready for repose, she became restless, and talked, and raved, and bemoaned her miserable state, till she wrought herself into a perfect fever. There were two points, however, on which she was quite docile; she never objected to any food that was offered, but ate it greedily, notwithstanding what she had asserted to Mr Forsyth, and she always submitted to whatever was prescribed by a doctor, although she generally made an outcry afterwards that the remedies had killed her. Ac-

cording to directions, Miss Tweedie, with an assistant, applied the sticking plaster. But she had delayed the operation to the very last, when they should all be retiring for the night, as she anticipated that after it was put on there would be a scene which she had no desire to witness. And she was quite correct in her supposition, for the most frantic howling immediately commenced from the fancied pain produced by the application, and the whole of the household hastened to shut themselves up in their own dormitories at a distant part of the building, that they might be out of hearing of the dismal and appalling sounds. Miss Hamilton was thus left to scream herself to death if she pleased, while Mrs MacMartin, the only one a-foot, was lingering still at the kitchen fire, leisurely accoutring herself for her undertaking, and when every soul in the house but herself and her patient was sunk in the arms of Morpheus, she reluctantly quitted her station by the fireside, and slowly and deliberately mounted the principal stair, and with a lazy step proceeded along the corridor. The distressing cries of Miss Diana arrested her attention, and they waxed louder and louder as she, with the din of heavy feet, approached the sick-room. But when the tall and large uncouth masculine figure of the head-cook and housekeeper entered, the effect was imposing. Her head was enveloped in a huge night-cap of dingy flannel which concealed part of her countenance, and her person was wrapped in the identical cloak which Keith mistook for his master's, made of home-spun stuff, and of ample dimensions, which she kept to defend her from the weather when she went abroad. In this guise recognition was impossible, and at

sight of what looked a horrible apparition to Miss Diana's disordered fancy, her wailings were hushed into a perfect calm. A couple of wax-lights were burning on the toilet. The curtains of the bed were all tucked up to admit air, as the unhappy patient always complained of suffocation. A large, heavy, old-fashioned easy chair was placed near the bed for the accommodation of her attendant, but Mrs MacMartin not liking its position, lifted the unwieldy piece of furniture with an ease which to Miss Diana was astounding, as it seemed to indicate superhuman strength, and placed it beside the fire, exactly opposite the bed, full in the patient's view.

Before stationing herself there, she took up both the candles and blew them out, but the fire burned sufficiently bright so as to shew distinctly every thing in the apartment. The invalid continued quiet with fear, and scarcely allowed herself to breathe. Mrs MacMartin did not curiously investigate whether her eyes were shut or not, and made no inquiry as to how she felt, but in her own mind hoped she had fallen into a slumber, and giving herself no farther concern, wrapped herself closely in her cloak, sank down amid the comfortable cushions of the easy chair, and for the space of half an hour yawned so hideously in Miss Diana's face, that to her imagination it seemed very like a monster going to swallow her up, and yet, fearful as was the sight, she had not power to turn her back upon it, but, like the fascination of the basilisk, her eyes were rivetted on the object which threatened destruction. And when the devouring pit was closed, and the jaws at rest, the yawning was followed by a deep stertorous breathing through the throat and

nostrils, which by degrees became more sonorous, and then a loud snore of the profoundest bass in regular alternation, with a whiffling sniffing sound, continued without intermission till the hour of seven struck next morning on the great clock. Mrs MacMartin then awoke, thrust her hand up beneath her dingy flannel hood, scratched her head, yawned and stretched herself, and rising, walked out of the chamber with the same gigantic air with which she had made her entrance, having, without an effort on her part, achieved a victory much to her credit, for Miss Diana had not breathed a complaint during the whole night.

CHAPTER VII.

“No argument like matter of fact is.”

The repose of a quiet night has a wonderful effect upon an invalid, and it had so upon Miss Hamilton, in a very perceptible degree. She had not only been quiet, but she had slept : for as the fire died out, and the unearthly visage on which she gazed faded from her vision in the darkness, the sonorous breathing of this terrific guardian lulled her to sleep, and a long, deep, refreshing sleep she enjoyed.

Next day, she was evidently better : she was rational and composed, and as docile as a lamb. Mr Forsyth's pitch plaster had wrought a charm ; it got all the praise,—Mrs MacMartin's services were overlooked and unrewarded even with acknowledgment. Such is generally the fate of modest merit.

Lady Grace, when she saw this favourable change

in her young friend, urged her to rise and take an airing. The weather was particularly inviting, and if she could have been persuaded, she would gladly have availed herself of the opportunity, and driven home with her.

Miss Hamilton, however, could not be prevailed upon, and begged to be allowed to wait till next day to make the attempt. But when next day came, her phantasies had taken a new turn ; her bodily strength seemed completely to have failed, and Lady Grace found her in the morning so low and so weak, like one whose energies are prostrate after a fever has subsided, that she could not support herself in an upright posture, and when she attempted to raise her hand to her head, it fell powerless by her side.

She spoke none. She refused all nourishment, scarcely permitting a tea-spoonful of wine and water to be squeezed through her teeth, which were fast clenched and prominently seen, as when the change indicative of near dissolution has settled upon the countenance, and the visage was of a clayey colour. Lady Grace had not attained to such an advanced period of life, without having witnessed sickness in various forms ; but, nevertheless, she had no skill in physic whatever. For the slightest ailment which occurred in her own family, the physician's aid was called, and she trusted so implicitly to doctors, whose attendance she deemed indispensable on every occasion of sickness, that she never acquired any knowledge of the domestic treatment of a patient herself, a duty in which it is so much a female's province to be fully initiated. When she saw Miss Hamilton apparently on the point of expiring, she became terribly alarmed. The dread of her dying

in her house, without her friends having been apprised of her illness, made her send off, without delay, a special messenger to her father, while she had couriers flying in all directions to fetch Dr Medwyn wherever he could be found.

Sir James and Lady Hamilton were a good-natured, easy-minded, homely old couple. They were immensely rich, but did not live in any style suitable to their wealth. Their establishment, however, lacked nothing of substantial comfort. They were proverbial for their hospitality, but they expended nothing on shew. Sir James knew the value of money; he had come late in life into the possession of his title and estate. He was brought up to business habits, and had acquired great wealth by his own industry, independent of that which he got by inheritance and by his marriage. The only drawback in life to this worthy pair was their daughter, their sole representative. But they good-naturedly let her have her own way; yet she seldom would allow *them* to have theirs, and, for the sake of peace, they yielded. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that they were glad when Diana got an invitation, for no part of their time was so happily spent as when she was from home; and they thought Lady Grace Inglis one of the most beneficent beings on earth, for relieving them so long out of the purgatory in which their daughter kept them.

When the accounts of her indisposition arrived from Ingliston, they took it very coolly. Sir James pronounced it to be only some of Diana's "tirivees," of which they had too often had such painful experience; and after reading Lady Grace's hurried communication, which was cautiously expressed, they

summoned up the Ingliston messenger, in order to learn further particulars from him. He had been warned by his mistress not to alarm the old people ; but when he saw by their manner that Lady Grace's account of their daughter's health was not likely to make a proper impression, he ventured to say that she was just in the JAW of death when he came away.

This statement was decisive. Sir James ordered his coach. Lady Hamilton was infirm, and never upon any occasion left home, but in a couple of hours he was at his daughter's bedside ; and, *mirabile dictu* ! that night, by half-past nine precisely, Miss Diana was seated at her father's comfortable supper-table, with a chagrined countenance to be sure, but no other external mark of indisposition, doing ample honour to the breast and pinions of a plump capon and some Bologna sausages.

CHAPTER VIII.

" Stand not amazed ; here is no remedy."

Lady Grace, whose whole mind was engrossed with her son's absence, had in the mean time written at least adozen scrolls of a letter intended to be dispatched to him when his retreat was discovered ; and this she was in hourly expectation of hearing had been done by Mr Stirling. Every amended scroll that she made of this well-digested epistle was more humbly affectionate and contrite than the preceding. She had at last accomplished a fair copy very much to her satisfaction, leaving the date and direction to

be added afterwards, and was in the act of perusing it very carefully for the seventh time, when Marshall announced that a person was below stairs who wished very particularly to see her ladyship. She inquired who the individual was. Marshall replied that it was a country woman. Was she one of the tenants? No. Had Marshall ever seen her before? He said that he had not. Lady Grace then asked her name. The servant replied that he had not inquired, but he supposed her to be a person selling something or wanting charity, and he waited, evidently expecting and wishing for an order to turn her away. Few servants like to be troubled with poor petitioners to their masters; and Lady Grace gave the order that she should be dismissed immediately, for she was particularly engaged, and could not be disturbed. But when Marshall descended to the servants' hall with his message, the stranger, who was seated there, and, evidently fatigued after a long journey on foot, refused to depart, intimating that she was in no hurry, and would wait till the lady was at leisure.

"That you need not do," replied Marshall; "my lady will not see you to-day, and it is as much as our situations are worth, to encourage beggars and hawkers about the place."

The woman declared she was neither a beggar nor a hawker, but had come on private and particular business to the lady, and that she would not travel twenty miles for nothing, and be beat by any dinkit out livery-man, for as braw as he thought himself. The individual who took it upon her to address the consequential Marshall in this way, was a middle-aged little woman, of a swarthy brown complexion,

on whose good-natured countenance there was constantly a broad gaping smile indicative of a weak intellect. A brush of grizzled hair above her furrowed brow stuck straight out from below the plain border of a long-eared linen cap. Her dress consisted of a longish bed-gown of deep orange and black stripe, over a petticoat of blue druggit. A light checked apron, and a kerchief of pink and white put on above the bed-gown shawl fashion, and a large pair of men's gloves of brown leather, completed the equipment. Her feet were bare, but she had a bundle in her hand, tied up in a towel as white as snow, indeed every part of her dress indicated the most scrupulous cleanliness; and this bundle, Marshall had supposed contained the wares she had for sale, but it was neither more nor less than her shoes and stockings, which she had taken off at the commencement of her journey; and in another compartment of the parcel were some substantial slices of skim-milk cheese, laid between plies of pease-meal bannocks, brought for refreshment by the way.

While Marshall was meditating to take the poor, half-witted looking creature by the shoulders, and turn her to the door, she, with the most edifying philosophy, nothing daunted by his dignified presence, untied her little bundle, took an old handkerchief from her pocket to wipe the dust from off her feet, and drew on her grey worsted hose and her shoes, in perfect defiance of the peremptory order, which was given in a high tone of command.

"You must leave this house instantly, I say," said Marshall.

"And what for should she do that?" cried Mrs MacMartin, who, unobserved, had been hovering

about the hall-door listening to the colloquy, and was particularly struck with the tempting intimation which the woman gave, of having "private and particular business" to communicate to her lady. "If you grudge," added she, "the honest woman a seat in the hall, which, after all, is riding beyond your commission, she may come beside me in the kitchen."

Mrs MacMartin did not require to repeat her invitation. The stranger, with her little bundle of bread and cheese folded again in the towel, rose with a countenance expressive of the most innocent delight, and availed herself of the hospitable offer, while Marshall walked off, and, in a low, growling voice, uttered something as he went, which it would not be very edifying to record.

If Lady Grace will not hear this woman's private news, *I* will, thought Mrs MacMartin to herself. But there was a glow of kindness, as well as a motive of curiosity, which dictated her attentions to the stranger, when she placed her by the fire, and gave her a refreshment of the best which her pantry contained; and a happy, hearty, grateful meal the creature made, and, in return for Mrs MacMartin's hospitality, she offered her a share of her pease-meal scones, which she thought might be a rarity; as it was not likely, she remarked, that they could make the like in such a grand house. And Mrs MacMartin, with a courtliness that might have graced a drawing-room, accepted the offering, praised its excellence, and assured her simple guest that she had not relished any thing so well for many a day, for she was perfectly *staved* of loaf-bread.

A couple of hours did not elapse, before the cook and all the servants below stairs were in possession

of the stranger's secret. Mrs MacMartin's kindness had opened her heart, and she began to hint at the motives of her visit to Ingliston, and then she fully explained them ; but, ere she had proceeded far, she had more auditors than her entertainer. Men and women speedily congregated around her to listen, and, by degrees, she gave them, minutely and circumstantially, her whole personal history.

This individual was, as she informed the hearers assembled round her, an unmarried person, but, according to the common phrase which she used on the occasion, she had had a misfortune. She was the mother of twin children, a boy and girl, of whom Sir Norman Inglis was the father, and they had now attained their ninth year. She had all along maintained them chiefly by her own industry, neither she nor they ever having burdened the session ; and she earned her living by winding pirns for the weavers at the Greenmill, her native village, or doing occasional work in the fields in the summer season. She had been in the habit of receiving a trifle, for educating the children, from Sir Norman, transmitted through the hands of one of the visiting elders of her parish : but of late, the payment of this little allowance had ceased. She would not, however, have been uneasy on that account, for it had sometimes been as long due before ; but a rumour had reached the Greenmill, brought thither by a woman that travelled the country with a basket of stoneware, that Sir Norman had fled the country for debt, and that all his effects were to be sold ; and she had rested neither night nor day till she came to Ingliston, to inquire of the lady if some small *aliment* could not be given, to enable her to complete the education of

her children, and put them in a way of making their bread.

The stranger's tale was not devoid of interest, and none of her auditors doubted of its truth. But, however strong her claims seemed to be in the eyes of Mrs MacMartin, and the under-cook, the laundress, and the house-maid (which last had had a *misfortune* herself), neither they nor any of the other servants could have ventured to solicit for her an audience of Lady Grace. As to asking Marshall to be the bearer of any further message, it was out of the question. Keith declined bringing himself into a scrape either with his master or mistress, by interfering in such a delicate affair. Ross and Watson were equally decisive in refusing; and old Blair the coachman, who seemed to feel particular sympathy for the woman's case, declared that, if it had not been for circumstances,—which, however, he did not explain,—he would have gone up stairs himself, and advocated her cause, although he had never been in the drawing-room but once in his life since he came to the place, and that was when Lady Grace called him up as witness against the stable-boy, who had been charged with making depredations in the dairy, having been detected coming out with a drop of cream at the point of his nose.

By the time that the servants had heard and commented on the woman's story, it was bordering on two o'clock, the usual hour for Lady Grace's walk, and the time for their own dinner. They therefore repaired to the servants' hall for that reason, leaving the communicative stranger alone with Mrs MacMartin, who remained behind with her in the kitchen. So much anxiety to obtain an interview with Lady

Grace had been evinced, that, when thus left to themselves, Mrs MacMartin ventured to put her new friend upon a plan to accomplish it, but enjoined the strictest secrecy as to her having given such an advice. The stranger readily agreed to these terms, and eagerly embraced the method proposed, which was this: The cook was, in the first place, to take it upon her to perpetrate a high crime, by giving her egress from a private door leading to the retired walks of the place, and to which none had access but Lady Grace herself, or any one to whom she gave especial permission; and the woman was to walk along till she came to two double rows of lofty beech trees, which formed an avenue of three-quarters of a mile in length to the right-hand side, and, when she gained the farthest extremity of this walk, she was to proceed no further, lest she should come in sight of the wood-keeper's house, but turn up again by the same way as she went, as if coming direct from the western lodge, and she would be sure to meet her ladyship in the face; for it was near about the time when she would be setting out, and there was no fear of making any mistake as to the individual, for she was a tall, stately old lady, who might be known among a thousand, and she wore a cloak and hat of black satin, with a full lace-ruff, every ell of which cost three guineas. Loath to miss the object of her journey, and fully acquiescing in Mrs MacMartin's plan, the woman stole out upon an enterprise which any one, whose feelings were not blunted by imbecility of mind, would have naturally shrunk from attempting. But she, nothing daunted, sped along with a brisk step and many an anxious look behind her, till she arrived at the said beech avenue,

and there she wandered to and fro for a full half-hour, till, beginning to lose heart, she ventured again within view of the house; and there she stopped, with her eyes fixed on the noble mansion, till she caught a glimpse of the dignified figure which the cook had described, turning an angle of the building, and advancing in the direction of the beech walk. When she came in full view, the stranger stood aghast. There was something so awe-inspiring in the stately mien and gorgeous equipment of the old lady, that her heart almost failed her, and she remained stock-still, gaping and staring with astonishment, and had neither strength to retreat, nor courage to advance. She, however, as Lady Grace approached nearer, mustered ability to make a very low obeisance, which her ladyship scarcely noticed in passing; but, from the moment she caught a view of this intruder on her private walks, she was meditating in her own mind a rebuke to the wood-keeper for his dereliction of duty.

"My lady, my lady," cried the poor creature, plucking up resolution as she saw the lady glide away past her, and thought she was losing an opportunity never to be recalled. "My lady, my lady," she reiterated, while she hobbled after Lady Grace, who turned round and stood in an attitude of scorn at the interruption, but not unmingled with fear at the odd figure which advanced towards her, and the eagerness and perturbation of the stranger very much increased the impression of mental imbecility which her countenance bore, and indeed which her whole manner and appearance indicated. "My lady, my lady," repeated she, "I've travelled twenty long miles o' a weary road to get a word o' you, and

my certie ye're as gallant a woman as ever I saw, that are ye, and ye've been a bonny ane in your youth."——

"What do you want with me?" said Lady Grace angrily; "Pray, who opened the gate for you?"

The stranger put on a peculiar expression of gravity, as if endeavouring to recollect. "That's past my power to mind," said she, "for it was yoursel, my lady, and you alone, that I was bent upon seeing; and I may say, I had een for none, nor nothing else besides, and I neither lookit to the right hand nor to the left, but straught afore me, till I wan till this very bit, and now I've set my een upon ye, as comely a woman as ever took the road, and oh! my lady, ye had as comely a son. He was your ain perfect picture."

"What of my son?" cried Lady Grace, coming towards the woman with more of condescension in her aspect, "What of my son? Have you seen Sir Norman?"

"That I have," replied the stranger emphatically. "But it's ten long years, come Whitsunday, sin sine, and I've made an unco fend to bring up the twa bits o' weans, and bonny weans they are, my lady, nane need think shame o' them; and it's no me wad e'er hae troubled you or yours, but for that word that has come to our toun, that Sir Norman's concerns hae gane a' vrang, and are puttin' i' the hands o' a writer, and that a' 's to be roupit, that every ane may get their ain as far as it will gang. And it's no but what I micht mak a strive to pit a steek o' claise on the bairns, as I've done all along, and gie them their mouthfu' o' meat, but then the schoolin', my lady, that's the prime thing, and I'm

never fit to do that as it sud be done, and if there could only be some sma' little aliment allowed when a' ither body's settled like, to bring the weans forate for a year or twa, and then they could do for their sells, and be an honour to the family, I'se warrant."

I do not undertake to delineate the conflicting feelings which were stirring in the mind of Lady Grace when she heard the woman's address, to which nothing but her eagerness to obtain intelligence of her son would have made her listen. At the same time, the scope of the speech could not fail to convey to her a notion of what it was intended she should be made acquainted with. But she was not one to be satisfied with a mere guess at the truth which flashed across her as the woman spoke, but she made her tell distinctly, and in so many words, what her claims were upon the Ingliston family. After the woman had plainly stated the case in a way not to be misunderstood, Lady Grace, with strange perversity, then expressed her doubts of its truth, perhaps feigning to disbelieve her, that she might have a plea for dismissing her from her presence.

The breach which subsisted between Lady Grace and Sir Norman, and for which the former was conscious she had herself to blame, was a reason why she forbore being very harsh or violent in expelling the poor suppliant, a thing which she would not have hesitated to do had matters been going smoothly on, and her son at home. But his absence was a check upon all her proceedings, and after expressing her doubts of the woman's veracity, she merely desired her to quit the premises immediately, and offered, at the same time, a few shillings to pay for a night's lodging, and buy refreshment

by the way. The stranger, however, would not accept the offered bounty till she should convince the lady that she was no impostor, and she took from an old leather pocket-book certificates from the minister and elder of her parish, of her admission to church communion, and of the baptism of her infants. Lady Grace would not vouchsafe to look at these, but in a severe tone again ordered her from her presence, and threw upon the ground for the woman to pick up the proffered money, which she would not, when it was rejected, condescend to return to her own purse. Suddenly a vehicle drew up, the approach of which the eagerness of both parties had prevented their observing till it was close upon them. It was an uncommon conveyance to be seen in the policies of Ingliston, an old shabby noddy, which, but for its contents, would not have found admission at the gate. Lady Grace eyed it with amazement, when out looked Dr Irving, the clergyman, and ordered the driver to stop, and forth he came with a joyous happy air to shake her almost reluctant hand, and out stepped Sir Norman at his back.

The mother's feelings at sight of her son caused all others to pass away from her breast. The sudden surprise made the blood to forsake her countenance, and a faintish giddy sensation came over her, but she was not one that gave way to these weaknesses. She checked her feelings, and while she extended her arms to embrace Sir Norman, he seemed to her at that moment more dear a thousand times than he ever was before, and his faults, if he had any, could not be remembered by her.

Sir Norman himself, with rather a sheepish air,

and the expression of a truant from school that is conscious he has done wrong, and would fain say most contritely that he never would do so again, returned the maternal caress. His eye, too (which did not lessen his embarrassment), had caught a glimpse of a person whom he could scarcely recognise, and yet he could not altogether forget.

Ten years had made a greater change than it usually does upon middle life. He remembered the stranger who now stood gazing on him, a blooming, comely girl, and now not a trace of her good looks was left. The bright complexion and locks of jet which in former days met with universal admiration in her native place, could now no more be identified with the embrowned skin, the deeply furrowed brow, and the wiry grey hair, which made her appear like a person advanced in years. The smile of peace and health which once enlivened her good-humoured countenance had given place to that habitual unmeaning idiotical laughing expression, which shewed that the event that had so much affected her personal appearance had also made ravages on her intellect ; and at times there was an unnatural buoyancy of spirits about her, but in the main she was not deficient in practical common sense, which was manifest in the care with which she had reared her offspring, and she had struggled hard to accomplish this. Toil and anxiety had been her portion ever since they were born, and she had had all a parent's solicitude, without a parent's honour.

While the meeting was taking place between the mother and son, the clergyman was directing the driver to move off with his conveyance towards the offices ; and then Lady Grace, leaning on her son's

arm, with Dr Irving at her other side, walked slowly onwards to the house, leaving the country woman standing as if immoveable,—for she was stunned at the rencontre, and at a loss what to do. But, as if suddenly recollecting herself, she picked up the silver, which still lay on the ground, and running, or rather trotting, after the party, called out in a triumphant voice, “My Lady Inglis, tak’ your money, for it shall never be handled by me till ye be convinced that I’m nae cheat; and I’m no feared now, when I see Sir Norman’s no awa’. It’s been a’ an idle clash thegither.”

“That’s a poor deranged woman,” said Lady Grace aside to the clergyman; for she now became terribly uneasy lest any thing detrimental to her son’s reputation might transpire in his presence. And she urged the two gentlemen to go on and not to mind her, as both of them naturally turned round when the voice from behind arrested their attention. “I shall dismiss her, for she is very annoying,” said Lady Grace, quitting hold of her son’s arm, and turning towards the woman, whom she addressed in a peremptory but not unkind tone.

“Go round,” said she, “to the back entrance of the house, which, at the end of this walk, you will see on your right hand, and ask for Miss Tweedie my maid, who will see that you get some refreshment, till I have another opportunity of speaking with you.”

The woman had now gained a point. She had sense enough to press her claims no farther for the present. She forthwith pocketed Lady Grace’s bounty without farther scruple, and curtsied to the ground, uttering a thousand thanks; but, instead of

keeping behind, and making her way to the house leisurely in the rear of her betters, she thought she could not promptly enough obey the lady's order, and she hastened past the party, and waddled on before them in the most extraordinary fashion imaginable ; for the poor creature, owing to some debility of her limbs, had a very odd gait, and, at the grotesque attempts she made to walk with speed, Dr Irving could not suppress a smile, nor forbear a humorous remark : but Sir Norman was grave and silent.

In the mean time, Lady Grace was enjoying a self-satisfaction which she had rarely felt ; for she thought she had managed every thing so judiciously. She, in the first place, as a sort of atonement for her past conduct, had anxiously studied her son's feelings on the present occasion, and thought she had succeeded admirably in saving him from embarrassment ; and particularly as, by getting clear of the unwelcome intruder in the way she did, she put it out of her power to proceed with any explanation before the minister ; and then, by directing her to ask for Miss Tweedie, in whose prudence she had full confidence, she imagined that she was securing her from holding any intercourse with the inferior servants, and making any exposure to them.

The party talked of indifferent matters as they passed along to the house, but not a word on the subject of Sir Norman's absence escaped from the lips of any one of them.

But, as soon as they were seated within doors, Lady Grace, who was perfectly overjoyed at so happy a termination to the miserable anxiety she had endured on her son's account, and, feeling herself the

original aggressor, had not words to express her contrition, nor her joy at his restoration. Nor did she attempt it, but placed in his hands the laboured epistle which she had penned that morning. Sir Norman put on his spectacles for the perusal; and, after he had read it over, he was only heard to remark, as he put it carefully in his note-case and consigned it to his pocket, that "it was all nonsense."

CHAPTER IX.

"Poor gentleman, he droops apace,
You'll plainly find it in his face."

Now that Sir Norman Inglis had returned safe and sound to his own house, and in perfect good humour, as was afterwards proved when seated at an excellent dinner which was speedily prepared, and when he had the satisfaction of finding his mother, whom he really loved, most condescendingly bent upon pleasing him and making him happy, it may seem unnecessary to give any account of his *elopement*, of which he was heartily ashamed, for he never so much as alluded to it himself, and, but for a private conversation which Lady Grace had with Dr Irving, she never would have learned where he had been.

The truth was, he had made rather an awkward and a shabby flight for a baronet. Had he gone to London, or Bath, or to the continent, and carried it off in style, it might have done, and could have borne telling. But he had ventured only a stone's cast, we may say, from his own door. In fact, he had kept within the bounds of his own parish. It

was, however, an extensive one, and many parts of it retired and thinly peopled, so that he might have remained in hiding long enough, but for his excellent friend Dr Irving.

It will be remembered, that the exact time of his departure from Ingliston was unknown. He had passed a sleepless night after absenting himself from his guests at dinner, and he rose by day-break, and wandered out to stroll about his own grounds, and to consider whether he should make his appearance again while Miss Hamilton was in the house. Not a creature was stirring about the place when he was thus early abroad for meditation. He crossed a field, and sought his favourite walk through a wood, by a narrow winding foot-path leading to a stile, on the other side of which lay the public road. He used, in his daily walk, to cross that stile, and ascend a little eminence which rose at the opposite side of the road, from which he had a commanding view of the surrounding country, and he, from that station, could accurately, from the appearance of the distant hills, prognosticate the weather. On that morning, he mounted the stile as usual, looked to the right and left for a short space, and then descended to the road. This was not the high-road, but one which joined it, crossing the country in a north-easterly direction, and leading to no place of importance. A stage-coach passed twice a-week by this route, for the accommodation of persons at a distance from the principal road; and, just as Sir Norman had descended the stile, and was standing in the middle of the way, undecided which direction to take, this early vehicle came driving along. "There's plenty of room," cried the coachman, pulling up his horses,

and stopping when he saw Sir Norman standing like a traveller on the outlook for a conveyance. "Inside or outside do you want?" "Inside," replied Sir Norman in a hesitating manner, taken unawares by this unlooked-for incident, which seemed at once to settle the question he had been trying to decide in his own brain, as to whither he should betake himself; and the hand of a passenger was instantly stretched out at the coach-window to turn the handle of the door and make way for Sir Norman's admission. Sir Norman hesitated. "In with you," cried the driver from his box. "Shove in quick."

There was no space allowed for deliberation. In packed Sir Norman. The other, and only, inside passenger who let him in fastened the door, and off they drove.

Sir Norman had none of the requisites necessary for a journey, except the main thing—money: and he had plenty of that in his pocket. After riding seven or eight miles, the coach stopped to change horses at a solitary inn called Newhall. It stood where four roads met, in the midst of a wide tract of moorland, where scarcely a vestige of cultivation could be descried in any direction. Sir Norman's travelling companion, who was a man from Buenos Ayres, who freely communicated his whole history and pursuits, expecting similar frankness in return, asked him so many perplexing questions as to the object of his journey, and what might be considered impertinent ones regarding his private personal concerns, that he was thankful of a respite even for a few moments, which the coach stopping afforded. Sir Norman therefore stepped out, and entered the parlour of the inn, which would have been but a

cheerless one except that a capital fire blazed in the grate, for it was a cheap coal-country. It had been but a cold ride across the moor, although the morning was bright and beautiful. And Sir Norman, invited by the cheering fire, drew near to warm himself, and then, pulling a chair to him, stationed himself before it, with his hat upon his head.

"The coach is ready to start," cried his officious South American friend, looking in at the door.

"But I am going no farther," said Sir Norman gruffly.

"You paid your fare the whole way to Cultimuir," cried the stranger.

"That's no concern of yours, sir."

"What a saucy old cub you are ; more money than brains, I expect." And off he set to resume his seat in the vehicle, leaving Sir Norman, who was suffering all the discomfort of a long fast, to his own meditations.

When thus left to himself and to the exercise of his own free will, Sir Norman, according to the natural order of proceeding, rang for something to eat. The summons was answered by the hostess herself, a respectable, not unlady-like, elderly female, the widow of a Paisley manufacturer, who had once been in a great way, but had failed in business, and, at his death, she was left pennyless, with three sons depending on her for support. She had tried several modes of making a living, and had not altogether been unsuccessful in any of them. Although she had saved nothing, she had paid her way, and two of her boys were educated, and put to apprenticeships : but the eldest son was still at his studies ; he designed to be a minister. His mother had used every exertion to

forward his views ; and, as the small way of traffick-
ing in which she had been engaged in a country
town was on the decline, by reason of the many who
had started in the same line, she had gladly engaged
in this new speculation of taking the inn at New-
hall, and she was but just entered upon the trial.

Her manner and appearance secured to her the
favour of strangers. There was a sober propriety in
all she did, and a due attention to comfort, which
was sure to gain upon the sensible part, at least, of
her customers. All this had its due weight with Sir
Norman. Breakfast was speedily brought to him,
of which his long abstinence made him partake
heartily, and with greater relish than he had done
for many a day ; and, in the first glow of indepen-
dent self-satisfaction which he felt, he thought he
could have remained in that seclusion for life, free
from the responsibilities of his station, and, above
all, free from maternal jurisdiction.

The only drawback to his pleasure and comfort in
this new destination was a certain uneasiness which
he always experienced on approaching the window,
the room being on the ground floor, lest he should
be recognised. So very few were the strangers who
enlivened that desert with their presence, that he
might have been perfectly at ease on that score ; but
people are always weak enough to suppose them-
selves and their secrets of so much importance, that
they fancy the half of the world is in a fever of an-
xious curiosity about them, when in reality that half
of the world whom they suspect is thinking nothing
at all of the matter. Sir Norman, however, like
other persons of wisdom and precaution, could not
rest till he was beyond the possibility of detection.

He inquired at the landlady if she had no upper-room for him, as he wished to be quite private. Mrs Hume informed him that her son was occupying the principal apartment, which was immediately above, but she would cause him instantly to remove his things for his accommodation, and send *him* up to the attics. But the attics was the place which Sir Norman preferred for himself. He considered that there he would be free from all intrusion, and he requested to be shewn up to them forthwith. Although this guest had no luggage with him, Mrs Hume had no doubt of his respectability. He had already changed a ten-pound note in the house, having insisted on paying immediately for his breakfast, and he had so indisputably the air of a gentleman, that it occurred to the landlady that he was some great man incog. ; a man of letters, like her son, probably, and might have chosen that seclusion in order to prosecute, without molestation, some great literary or scientific undertaking.

It was plain he had no apparatus or books for making discoveries or research, but if he were an astronomer or clerk of the weather, he would have the sky-light at the stair-head, and all the garret-windows looking to every point of the compass, from which he might make observations on the heavens, morning, noon, and night. Or if he were a mere author, a writer of imagination, he, perhaps, for all the hostess knew, besides the indispensable requisite of a brain replenished with ever-growing fancies, and he had a very prominent development of head, albeit she and the world were not so enlightened regarding phrenology in those days, might have the other necessities for his craft stowed in his coat-

pocket, to-wit, a stock of pens, ink, and paper. Now the landlady of Newhall could not have deduced all this from the appearance of her guest, if she had not had a touch of learning or of genius herself; and the truth was, that, in her maiden years, she had been a not unsuccessful candidate for public fame, inso-much as that certain sonnets, to which were appended three letters which formed the initials of her name, had found insertion in some of the provincial journals of those parts, where her native town of K—— was situated, and had been loudly extolled as infinitely superior to “Newspaper poetry.” But whether they received this meed of praise from their real merit, or from the circumstance that they were currently believed by the worthy inhabitants of those districts to be the production of the leading man there, a man of much wealth, much interest, and more promises than would counterbalance both, the initials of whose name happened to be the same as those of the fair and obscure authoress, who was never suspected, it is impossible now to decide.

Sir Norman Inglis had not long taken possession of his exalted quarters before Mrs Hume discovered that he was not only deficient in the requisites for authorship, barring, it might be, the skull filled with ideas, which she could not so prematurely pronounce to be wanting; but that he was also deplorably destitute of the requisites for comfort, as she feelingly intimated to her son the student, when, among the multifarious articles with which his wooden chest was crammed, she was rummaging for his best linen shirt and newest pair of worsted stockings to lend to the gentleman, who, she declared, “would be

perfectly naked, she was sorry to say, if it were not for the clothes that were upon his back."

Sir Norman, unconscious that the kind-hearted widow was thus depicting his destitution, was enjoying the freedom and retirement of his own proper attic chamber, a low-roofed, but commodious apartment, and also his privilege of perambulating, when he pleased, in the opposite garret, a room of equal dimensions, unoccupied and unfurnished, and felt no inconvenience and no privation, but that of being debarred from taking exercise in the open air, a restraint which he put upon himself for fear of being seen or recognised by any one. This strict confinement within doors was not a mode of life likely to agree long with his health. But, in the mean time, he was sufficiently occupied and amused with the new publications—books and pamphlets, the latter chiefly of a religious or controversial nature, which the young candidate for the ministry had brought from Edinburgh with him, and was proud to oblige the stranger gentleman with a perusal of. But the reading of these could not fix Sir Norman's attention for ever, and when they were gone through, which was very speedily done, he had no other resource, and time began to wax heavy and dull. The deficiencies of his wardrobe being also supplied from the same quarter, was a circumstance which at first gave him no uneasiness, but, as his spirits grew flat, oppressed him with an overwhelming sense of obligation, which it seemed to him he never could repay, although, in reality, he paid and overpaid for every kindness he received. It was when this uneasy mood began to steal over him that he dispatched to

his mother a letter, which he commissioned a person to be the bearer of, who proved unfaithful to his trust, for being well bribed by Sir Norman to do his duty, and return with a speedy answer, he, instead of going to Ingliston, went three miles beyond it to join in some revels which were holding at the village. The consequence of this was, that he did not execute his errand at all; and the letter with which he was entrusted passed from hand to hand, till at last it was taken in charge by a drunk carter, who was going home the way of Ingliston, and he being invited in to take a supernumerary mouthful at a toll-house on the road, had the honour of an introduction to Mrs MacMartin, into whose bosom it ultimately found a resting-place.

The non-appearance of the messenger with an answer, was no trifling matter to Sir Norman in his present mood. He felt indescribable uneasiness at the circumstance, and could not rest. Night and day he was on the outlook. Every voice, every sound of footsteps, nay, every blast of wind round the corner of the house, raised his expectation, and he was out at his chamber-door listening over the top of the stair, looking out at this window and then at that, and last of all at the sky-light, so that if this fit of anxiety did not turn his own head, the mere witnessing of his restlessness would have turned the head of any one who might have been unfortunately doomed to be a spectator of it.

After this, Sir Norman lost heart altogether and became quite melancholy; he had no amusement, no employment, and scarcely any money remaining, for he had lavishly given almost all that he had to his landlady, whose kindness he thought he could

not sufficiently compensate. She would have considered herself well paid, although she had received nothing more from him for weeks to come. But this did not prevent him from fancying that he had become a burden. His appetite entirely left him ; and, in addition to his other distresses, he had caught a severe cold from his exposure to the night air at the open windows.

Mrs Hume was greatly concerned at the apparent unhappiness of her guest, and at length she grew so seriously alarmed for his health and sanity of mind, that she could not forbear to communicate her fears to Dr Irving, the minister, who before his annual sacrament called, as he was making some pastoral visits in the remote parts of his parish. After much deliberation respecting the eccentric stranger, whom Mrs Hume described, it was agreed that Dr Irving should, as if by accident, steal in upon his privacy. This was to the reverend gentleman far from being a pleasant task, but it was done out of pure kindness and benevolence of heart, towards an individual for whose welfare Mrs Hume expressed the greatest solicitude.

When he entered Sir Norman's garret, he found the disconsolate gentleman seated in an elbow chair by a window, in the most melancholy and dejected mood, stooping forward with his eyes cast upon the ground, as if in intense study, or utter vacuity of mind, and his whole figure, which was noble, and carried an air of importance, seemed actually dwarfed down to diminutiveness, while he sat in this subdued and humble posture. The hue of ill health was on his countenance, and his light brown hair, which seemed to have grown more profuse, hung

negligently down at each side of his face ; but his features, which were cast in a fine mould, and bore the impress of high intellect, did not fail, although a temporary cloud of discontent was overshadowing them, to strike Dr Irving when he entered, as those of one formed by nature for great attainments, had there not been something in himself or in his destiny which bound him down to a life of absolute insignificance.

The surprise which both parties felt at the rencontre almost put to flight the vapours of Sir Norman, and completely drove out of Dr Irving's mind the apologies he intended to make to the unknown guest of Newhall, whom he thus intruded upon.

These two were in general very good friends, although they seldom met. The Ingliston family were not famous for church-going propensities, the great distance of their residence from a place of worship being a standing excuse. Sir Norman Inglis rose on the entrance of the minister, and as he stood erect, with solemnity in his aspect, and pointed to a chair for him to sit down, he shewed that his figure had lost nothing of its commanding height and natural air of dignity. Dr Irving, at a loss how to open a conference, most humbly obeyed the signal to be seated, and Sir Norman resumed his own chair, but did not open his mouth. " This is fine weather, sir," at length said the Doctor, making a bold effort.

" Umph," said Sir Norman. A pause followed. " You have been indisposed ?" again ventured Dr Irving, in a tone of voice half interrogatory and half consolatory.

"Not I, sir; I never was better in my life," was the unpropitious reply.

"I merely thought you seemed to have a cold," rejoined the other apologetically.

"What signifies a cold?" was Sir Norman's gruff answer, and a long uneasy pause ensued.

"Will you honour us with your company to dinner at the manse?" said Dr Irving, making a still bolder attempt at conversation.

"I can dine nowhere in this dishabille," replied Sir Norman, glancing down upon his person.

"We are quite alone, sir," said the clergyman, waxing more confident. "It is almost two years since we had the pleasure of a visit, and Mrs Irving fears we had been lacking in kindness since you did not come back."

"Far from it, far from it," said Sir Norman rapidly. "I never was so happy in my life as on that occasion. Mrs Irving is a most admirable lady. I wish we could see more of her than we do." The clergyman acknowledged by a bow this unexpected compliment to his wife, but did not venture to speak, as he saw Sir Norman had not finished what he had to say.

"Have you been at Ingliston?" asked Sir Norman, with an anxious look at the minister. "Not for three months," replied Dr Irving. "Was Lady Grace at church on Sunday?" was the Baronet's second query. The other answered in the negative.

"Then you cannot tell me if there be any strangers at Ingliston at present?" Dr Irving could give him no information as to that, and another

pause succeeded. "Have you heard any report of my being from home?" inquired Sir Norman, looking as if he wished to enter upon farther discourse. "None of any importance," replied the clergyman. "A week or two ago, I think I heard it said that you were not at Ingliston then, but the circumstance afterwards passed from my recollection, and it is altogether an unexpected pleasure to see you here."

"Then you think there is not much talk in the county about what has taken place?" rejoined Sir Norman with a searching look, hoping to discover that he had not made himself notorious.

"I am totally ignorant of any thing that has taken place which might be talked about," replied the minister, "if we except the gossip which will find currency in a country neighbourhood every day of the year."

When Sir Norman had satisfied himself that there was but little said of him, at least that had reached the clergyman's ears, he proceeded with some degree of courage to forestal any thing that might afterwards be reported of him, by opening his mind to Dr Irving, whom he considered to be a friend and a man of honour; and the restraint by degrees wearing off between the two, he accounted for his being in this state of exile, and fairly stated his reasons for leaving home, and intimated his determination not to return till every impediment to his comfort there was removed.

The conference was long and interesting. Dr Irving gave him his best counsel and encouragement, nor did he fail to prevail upon him to pass a day or two at the manse till he should learn how matters stood at Ingliston.

CHAPTER X.

"A thousand moral paintings I can shew."

The family at the manse consisted merely of Dr and Mrs Irving, and a young girl, a niece of the latter, the orphan-daughter of Mrs Irving's only sister, who had married an officer in the Madras cavalry. They both died abroad, and their child Henrietta was consigned to the care of her aunt, Mrs Irving.

Though just emerging from the years of childhood, she had already learned at an English seminary, where she had been boarded, those lighter graces and accomplishments which are considered indispensable in female education; and now, when she had come to reside with her uncle and aunt, they were imbuing her mind with more solid and useful acquirements. Dr Irving was himself a man of talent as well as piety, and his wife was a person of uncommon attainments. Possessing, as she did, a highly cultivated understanding, she neither was ashamed nor proud of having made considerable progress both in scientific and classical knowledge. But all that she knew in these departments she considered as absolutely nothing in comparison of the excellence of that knowledge which tends to improve the heart and life. A person of so much intelligence, and possessing such an elegant mind as Mrs Irving, did not fail to charm the Baronet; and the engaging unrestrained manners of her niece no less delighted him, and he felt himself so happy,

and became so fascinated with the little circle, that he would gladly have taken up his residence at the manse altogether; and he broached an idea of this sort one day to the worthy couple, with a view of seriously entering into some arrangement for that purpose, but no selfish consideration could for a moment induce them to give the smallest encouragement to a plan which seemed to them a dereliction of the duties of his station, as well as a compromise of its dignity. Dr Irving, on the contrary, urged upon him from day to day the propriety of sending some communication to his mother, or of appearing personally, to relieve the anxiety which she must be suffering. Sir Norman hesitated and delayed, but in a propitious moment a visitor arrived at the manse, and in the course of conversation gave sure testimony that he had met Sir James Hamilton and his daughter riding homewards. This information served more than Dr Irving's arguments to bring him to a resolution of going home. No time was lost in procuring a conveyance. The minister had a riding-horse, but kept no vehicle himself, so a messenger was dispatched to Newhall Inn to fetch Mrs Hume's noddie for their accommodation.

This passage of Sir Norman's life which has now been recorded, trivial as it is, and weak and whimsical as it may make him appear, was nevertheless an event in his history which tended more than any other circumstance to the future happiness and contentment of his life. Nay, it was the means of increasing all his comforts, and cementing all differences between the mother and son, and they afterwards spent their days in the greatest harmony. It seemed to open Lady Grace's eyes, and shew her

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that Sir Norman's temper was not one to be tampered with ; and although she had taken no warning from the decisive step which he took regarding his sisters, by discarding them from the house, she was convinced now by personal experience that he could still do determined things, and his next act of prerogative, as master of the mansion, might be exercised against herself.

These considerations, as well as real concern for what was past, made her in future walk warily and with less assumption of power, and Sir Norman by degrees found out that he might exercise a will of his own, and was in reality what he sometimes doubted of formerly—the master of the house. Oftentimes, however, in his moods of melancholy, did his thoughts wander back to the rigorous acts of petticoat government to which he had weakly submitted, and one circumstance in his personal history which blighted all the high hopes he had framed to himself of domestic bliss, would in these painful retrospects press upon his mind with all the weight of bitter self-upbraiding. He remembered, too, how he had been crossed in all his little pursuits and partialities, not that these crosses were worth being named in the same day with that disappointment which had set a seal upon his destiny ; but the time was not long gone by when he dared not suggest, far less carry into effect, any alteration or improvement about his premises. And it was only by dint of perseverance in his own way, while he seemed entirely to give into his mother's plans, leaving her, as it were, to be the conductress of every thing, that he got accomplished by degrees all those improvements about his house and grounds which rendered his place the

admiration of the whole country round. One fact which occurred while his ornamental operations were in progress may serve to illustrate the state of restraint under which he was kept.

After a new front or face had been put to the house of Ingliston at an enormous outlay, Lady Grace, who had a fancy for the picturesque, thought it would be a great adornment to have one particular part of the newly reared building covered with ivy. Sir Norman heard with dismay this proposal, which not only was contrary to his better taste, but would be an irremediable injury to the new erection. But he dared not offer an objection without risking an open rupture, and this he shrunk from, and, while apparently acquiescing, he with consternation and horror witnessed the plan put in execution, and the ivy planted under the doughty lady's directions and superintendence. With indescribable uneasiness and vexation he saw the invidious plant take root and flourish in spite of the evil eye he cast upon it day by day, and the maledictory sentence he secretly pronounced against it. But he determined in his own mind that his wall was not to support this destroyer, and although he had not courage to prevent its being placed there, and still less to take the bolder measure of causing it to be uprooted, he resolved upon its destruction, and used the following means to effect this.

Every morning a silver kettle filled with boiling water for shaving was brought up to his dressing-room, the window of which was directly over the spot where the obnoxious shrub grew, and every morning with pious punctuality was the scalding contents of this vessel emptied upon its devoted

head, nor did he cease to pour forth this libation to the demon of destruction till he saw it, root and branch, wither away.

In the mean time, his lady mother, unconscious of the cause, saw her favourite fainting and dying under the influence of this hot bath, and summoned all the horticulturists in her service to give aid and counsel in trying to recover it; but Sir Norman, who was also called upon to lament its decay, told them very gravely, with a serious expression of condolence for its fate, that it was in vain to attempt to restore or to replace it, for he had ascertained that ivy *would* not grow upon *new* walls. This was a piece of information regarding the natural history of the plant which was quite new to Lady Grace and her coadjutors, and was fully accredited by them, for none of them happened to be able to disprove it by their own experience, and Sir Norman's superior knowledge on the subject gained the victory.

It is said that to pour boiling water upon fruit bushes, not only kills the vermin, but makes the bushes shoot up with uncommon freshness and vigour. This is practised with success in America. I know not the truth of the experiment, but the fact of Sir Norman having killed the ivy by the same means, I can vouch for.

But now, Sir Norman no longer needed to have recourse to such unworthy stratagems to gain a point; for upon his return, Lady Grace was so bent upon conciliating his favour, that she would gladly have yielded to his opinions and predilections, and he himself seemed equally willing to be pleased with her arrangements, so that the most perfect unanimity subsisted between them.

The well-kept secret which had been divulged by the principal person concerned, namely the unexpected visitant from the Greenmill, was a fact which, under existing circumstances, Lady Grace found it prudent to pass over with becoming delicacy; and whatever she felt at the information, not a word of recrimination ever escaped from her lips. She found, however, that this claimant upon the family, when she had once got encouragement, was not so easily satisfied with the arrangements that were made for the maintenance of the children. The truth was, she had zealous partizans among the servants, Mrs MacMartin being the chief, who instigated her to enlarge her demands, and repeat her visits. The poor creature, whose judgment could not direct her better, followed the counsel of those injudicious advisers to the detriment of her own cause, and she, becoming troublesome, was at length prohibited by Lady Grace, with Sir Norman's concurrence, from ever setting foot again within the precincts of Ingliston.

Lady Grace, however, with some respect for a father's feeling towards his offspring, thought that Sir Norman might desire to countenance the children more than he liked to express, and to shew that she studied to please him, anticipated any wish he might have in that respect, by making a proposal herself to bring them to reside at Ingliston. Sir Norman's silence gave consent, for she saw that it was the silence of satisfaction, and of acquiescence in what she suggested, and she carried this plan into execution. The children were brought on her own terms, that is, they were prohibited all intercourse or correspondence with their mother, who was paid off with a

small sum of money, which might be a temporary assistance, but could not serve to lessen the toil with which she laboured to earn her bread.

Lady Grace, in thus patronizing her grandchildren, anticipated no very exalted destiny for them. The boy, she thought, would do well by and by as an errand boy, if tractable and trustworthy, till his years fitted him for some higher menial capacity; and she looked forward to the girl being trained as her own maid.

She did not say to Sir Norman that these were stations she had marked out for them; indeed, the footing on which they were to be received was a subject she never adverted to; and whether it would not have been better for them to have been left to the humble independence of their mother's mean fireside, or exposed to the contaminating influence of a tribe of pampered hirelings, is a question which the speculators on the training of youth may decide.

It is probable that Sir Norman did not altogether like the arrangement which consigned them, on the first day of their arrival, to the servants' hall, as it is said he was restless and sulky on that occasion, and was heard to utter certain indistinct angry sounds, which, however, conveyed nothing intelligible to the ear; but, as he offered no remonstrance, it is possible that his uneasiness and irritation may have arisen from some other cause.

When the two young strangers arrived, it was the hour when the family were at dinner. They were, however, heartily welcomed to the house by all the domestics, who, prompted by curiosity, thronged around them. Mrs MacMartin was foremost, with

tempting potations of well-sweetened tea, and shives of bread and butter, overlaid with honey-comb or gooseberry jam. But the two young creatures looked frightened and confused at the clamour that was raised about them, and the questions that were asked, and they refused to eat.

"Dear me, are you not hungry after your journey?" said Mrs MacMartin, sitting down on a bench, and taking the little girl on her knee, who immediately began to weep, and her brother shed a few tears also in sympathy, but brushed them hastily off with his hand, and tried to look composed, although the expression of his countenance was far from being happy. "Cheer up, my pretty dears," said Mrs MacMartin coaxingly. "Dinna greet for leaving your mother, for she'll no be lang o' coming to see you; and this is a prettier house than your mother's, is it na? And ye'll be made baith of ye grand ladies and gentlemen. Hout, ye must not be greetin' that gait, to make yoursells a' bleered if my lady were ordering ye up to be viewed in the dining-room." And the humane cook wiped the child's tears with her apron.

"Will ye come awa' wi' me," said the dairymaid, hoping to amuse them; "Will ye come awa' wi' me, and I'll shew ye our byres and our cows? I wager ye never saw the like, and ye'll see them superin' the calves."—"Aye, and ye'll see," interrupted the herd-boy, who was among the group of inn-door and out-of-door servants met on the occasion; "Aye, and ye'll see the muckle capper that we hae for boiling the cows' meat; an' ye'll see the sows, and a' the wee piggies grumph grumphin'; and ye'll see the spoot and the trough whaur the

kye drink ; and I'll let ye see the horse-midden, and the ash-midden——"

"And what wad the weans care for a' that ?" cried the laundress, interrupting him in his list of curiosities. "Let them gang wi' me, bonny lambs that they are, to the mangle-house, and get a ride upon the mangle; that will divert them better than ony thing."

"I'm thinking they'll no ride far on that," said old Blair the coachman, taking a long pinch of snuff. "But I'm certain I could shew them what would please them far mair than a' ye've mentioned; only I wudna offer to do it at this present time, for it's my belief and opinion, that ye're alarmin' the bairns wi' sae muckle speaking, and as lang as their hearts is grit at leavin' their mither, I would just let them a' be till they come to theirsells."

"I daur say ye're right, Blair," said Mrs MacMartin, rising and replacing the little girl on the seat beside her brother.

"But I daresay he's no right; for the children ought to be diverted and keepit out o' langour, that's certain, and garred forget what's what," rejoined the dairymaid.

"But, who do you think the little lassie's like?" cried the housemaid, broaching a new theme of discussion.

"I'll tell you that the morn," replied Blair, with a significant look.

"But I can tell ye *the night*, without waiting for the morn, wha baith the ane and the ither o' them's like," said Mrs MacMartin, looking still more knowing. "And they are just like them that they hae a gude right to resemble, and none can deny that that sees them."

"I ken what ye mean," cried the herd-boy. "Ye think they're like his honour and my lady."

"Whisht, whisht," said old Blair. "We're no askin' you ony questions, Geordie."

"What for should he whisht?" said Mrs MacMartin. "I mortally hate secrets and secrecies, about a thing, too, that's broad and wide by this time, I've no doubt. Na, na; dinna think to pass ony o' your tricks aff upon the bairns, to make them misdoubt wha they belong to, for it'll no do, take my word for't. They are better up at it than ye have a suspicion o'," concluded she, winking to the other servants, while the two children sat demurely, with their eyes fixed upon the stone-flags.

"Aye, that they are," responded the under-cook with a nod to her superior. "And they're sookin' in every word, if I'm no mistaken."

"Hoot, for shame," said old Blair, "ye're makin' the puir bit things look blate."

"Aye, they ken fine ye're speakin' about *them*," rejoined the laundress.

"They would be clean fules a' thegither, if they didna," cried Mrs MacMartin. "Yes, my dears," continued she, addressing the little creatures, who looked still more uneasy and abashed; "we're just conversing about *you*; but it's all for your improvement and advantage. We are all your well-wishers, and would be your humble servants, if required; that is to say, if them that has a power and a right to do for you were acting as they ought to act, and placing ye as you ought to be placed; for, wae's me, they've naebody else to do for. But oh! naturalty is a rare gift in the world, and in this house in par-

ticular. If, however, my dears, as I was saying, them that have a right and a power—”

“Oh, forgi’e you, Mrs MacMartin,” interrupted the housemaid, shaking her head, and looking sorrowfully, while she heaved a deep sigh as if she spoke from unfortunate experience. “Oh, forgie ye from blawin’ them up that way.”

“I’m blawin’ none o’ them up,” retorted the head-cook and housekeeper with some asperity, and drawing herself up as if she meant to assert, by some indubitable argument, the propriety of her giving utterance to the sentiments she was endeavouring to express. But there was no chance of her getting the conclusion of her speech delivered now; for Mrs MacMartin, although a sentimentalist, was no orator, and, when once put off her discourse, could not easily get on again. So, finding it impossible to manage the rest of the dignified address which she meant to make to the rising generation of the Inglises now before her, she, to indemnify herself for her disappointment, had recourse to a cruel taunt, which sent the poor housemaid weeping from the hall.

“That was too bad,” said the laundress in a tone of pity, when the housemaid was gone.

“It was cruel; oh aye, it was cruel,” said old Blair solemnly.

“She deserved it, she deserved it,” said Mrs MacMartin, in an emphatic tone of self-vindication. “What business had she to check me afore thae children that are perfect strangers to me? I can hae no ends in wishing to serve them, and when I only wanted to say something that might hae been of use to them a’ the days o’ their life.”

"You can say it now, then, when Jess is awa'," interposed Geordie the herd-boy, who was anxious to benefit by Mrs MacMartin's invaluable advice.

"I'll say nothing more than I've said," responded that sage matron. "I said nothing to Jess but the even down truth, she needna have taken it so hot."

"The even down truth's sometimes waur to bide than an even down lee," said old Blair; "but ye hurtit her feelings, that's what ye did."

"And she thinks naething about hurting mine!" said Mrs MacMartin, elevating her voice, but not in anger. "And my feelings are just as tender as ony body's, and a power mair easily hurt than hers upon maist occasions; but I'll tell you what it is, Blair, I only wish she never had had ony thing mair to hurt her feelings than what I've said or done, that's a' my wish; and I'll refer to any one of ye here present, if she need hae taen'd sae ill out my casting up about her ha'in the wean, when ye a' kent it as weel's I did. It was nae secret."

"And when we a' kent it sae weel, there was nae use o' tellin' us 't ower again," said old Blair drily.

"Ou aye, your a philosopher, wi' your tale," rejoined Mrs MacMartin, not, however, losing her equanimity, for she was no randy by nature, although she was sometimes forced to be one professionally, but wholly against her mind, and half against her conscience, as John Wesley said, when compelled to dissent from the establishment.

"Aweel, aweel," replied Blair, who had but a very vague idea of what the term meant, but was determined not to be angry, even though it were one of reproach. "Aweel, aweel, I wish ye be nae a'

obliged to be philosophers afore ye come to my time o' life."

"Weel, I wish we may be naething waur, and we'll no mak an ill shine," rejoined Mrs MacMartin, whose conscience did not completely acquit her for her behaviour to the poor housemaid, and she referred again to the company, in the tone of one anxious to justify herself, if there was any thing in what she said that Jess needed to have taken so much amiss.

"Oh, puir thing, it was a sair misfortune," said the under-cook, not venturing a direct reply to her superior. "It's keepit her sair doon, and nae ither wonder. Think how she ne'er got a farden aff that big rascal Captain Gosskirk, though he was wallowin' up to the e'e holes in wealth."

"Oh aye," chimed in the laundress in a doleful key; "and think how she toiled night and day to maintain the wean, and gae maistly every plack and penny o' her wages to thae vile radigals that she boarded him wi'; and he was aye needing something extra, for he was but a weakly bairn, and never out o' trouble, and nae marvel that he was weakly. But she never kent, till after he was dead and gane, that the puir innocent lamb was hungered, oh aye, hungered to death, nothing, nothing but downright ill guiding was the cause o' a' his ailments, and the puir bit thing, as the neeboor woman that sweelled him telt after-hand, it wad hae broken ony body's heart to hae seen his wae-begone countenance, and his breast-bane stickin' up as sharp as the breast-bane o' a hen that's died the lane o't at the mouttin season."

"She had herself to blame," said Mrs MacMartin, assuming a tone of wise reprobation, while a tear quivered in the corner of her eye, which, although it inconvenienced her a little, by causing a slight dimness of the sight, she would not have wiped away for the world, lest it should have betrayed to the spectators the fact of its existence there. "She had herself to blame," repeated she, "and that I maintain. She ought to have prosecute Captain Gosskirk, and made a public example o' him. That's what she ought to have done."

"No sae easy done as said, I'm thinking," remarked Blair. "What wud he hae cared for your prosecutions, or your public examples?" "I should hae made him care, black-hearted villain that he is," cried the cook, shaking her fist in a manner which indicated that she would have rejoiced to have brought it in contact with the delinquent Captain's head. "I should hae made him care, and that's my reason," continued she, winking to her auditors, which motion of her eyelid expressed, from its concealment, the unwiped tear, and it rolled leisurely and unnoticed over her cheek, and dropped into oblivion among the folds of the starched neckerchief which adorned her bust. "That's my reason for wishing to enstall the minds o' these young innocent creatures, who have as yet had no experience of such abominable heathens as Gaptain Gosskirk; for oh, this is a wild and wicked world! but the Lord be thanked, that, ill and unnatural as the world is, every one is not as bad as Captain Gosskirk, at least it's to be hoped so. And for your sakes, my dears," added she, stroking alternately the heads of the two children,

"for your sakes, my dears, I trust there are some that will aye feel that bluid is thicker than water, and act accordingly. And now, my bonnie lassie, can ye tell me what's your name?"

"Margaret Inglis," replied the girl, in a soft, sweet, timid tone of voice, and scarcely raising her eyes to the person who put the interrogation.

"And what do they ca' *you*, my pretty wee man?" further inquired Mrs MacMartin, directing her attentions to the other of the little strangers, whom she so zealously patronized. "What do they ca' *you*?"

"Sandy," replied the little master, in a far less pleasant tone than his sister, while he looked sulky, and as if affronted by the question.

"Sandy!" echoed the cook. "Is that a' ? Do they ca' ye naething mair nor Sandy ? Come, what's your ither name ?" And the cook coaxed him with another stroke on the head. But Sandy was inexorable, and would not answer the question, though urged upon him in various forms ; nor could he be brought, when it was fairly put to him, to acknowledge that his name was Inglis, but looked still more dissatisfied at the allegation.

"Weel, that beats a'," said Mrs MacMartin, astonished at his obstinacy, and looking round upon her companions, as if to learn from them what it meant. "That certainly beats a' ! To think the dour little doug looks as if he were ashamed o' his name. But I'll tell ye what it is," said she, looking to Blair and the laundress, as if eliciting their approval of what she was going to say to Master and Miss Inglis,— "I'll neither say more nor less than this, my dawties : Ye ken your faither is a gentleman ; your

mither's no being a leddy is nae faut o' yours," added she parenthetically. "And I have just this to say, that——." Here an unlucky interruption took place. Miss Tweedie and some of the men-servants, whose curiosity as yet had not been gratified with a sight of their master's children, entered the hall, and fairly broke off Mrs MacMartin's speech in the middle.

Mrs MacMartin's ideas and manner of expressing them were not very luminous, so it is probable that much of what she said or was drifting at might have been but indistinctly understood by those of riper years or more precocious intellect than Margaret Inglis and her twin brother; but that the conversation which has just been recorded was altogether unintelligible to those youthful auditors, I do not pretend to say; but the exact nature of the impression which it made, I still less undertake to define.

Miss Tweedie having accosted the young strangers in her blindest manner, took, as she had been previously directed by her lady, the little girl under her special care, and conducted her to her own apartment, where she was to be henceforth her companion and bed-fellow. The little boy wanted to follow his sister to Miss Tweedie's sanctum; but he was past the age for such indulgence, and therefore was prohibited. So he was left to the guardianship of the functionaries below stairs, and in due time, after he had cried himself sick and blind, refusing all comfort, he was committed, by express command, to Marshall's den for the night, much to the annoyance of that official, who liked no such marks of distinction. But, although the unfortunate Sandy lay blubbing for most of the night at the back of

the bed with his face to the stone-wall, it did not materially wound the feelings of his comfortable bed-companion, nor impair his rest, for he rose next morning with the vigour and contentment which usually belong to those who lead an easy life, and enjoy sound refreshing sleep. His little bed-fellow, on the contrary, was, when he rose, an infant image of despair. He cried when he got on his clothes; he cried when he was offered his porridge; he cried when he was looked at; he cried when he was spoken to. This was a distressing state of affairs. Mrs MacMartin flattered, kissed, and caressed him, and wiped his tears, and told him he would be a grand gentleman. Old Blair shewed him his pistols, and the dog's leather-collar with the brass-plate upon it, and the girths of the saddle that was away at the mending. The under-cook wound up the jack and set it agoing for his amusement; and Geordie the herd-boy, neglecting all other duties, made antics, to induce him to laugh. The housemaid, the dairymaid, and the laundress, essayed various divertisements, each in her own line; but all these benevolent attempts were fruitless. The little fellow still remained unhappy; and his unhappiness was reported to his grandmama, and his grandmama, who had not as yet condescended to see him, benignantly suggested chastisement as the proper remedy. But, for the honour of human nature as it existed among the inhabitants of the under-story of Ingliston House, be it recorded, there was not found one who would take in hand to inflict the chastisement which grandmama benignantly suggested. The case of his sister, at this period, was a somewhat more hopeful one. Different in disposition from her brother, and

with affections less strongly rivetted to the home of her infant years, she was more easily pleased with the novelty of her situation. And, perhaps, that point which is said to be so vulnerable in the female breast, was soon touched, and her childish vanity awakened, by the displays of the finery which was intended for her. Some of the elegant and costly articles which composed Lady Grace's wardrobe were selected by Lady Grace herself, and allotted to be made down to her grandchild.

The nimble fingers of Miss Tweedie, with astonishing cleverness, had a suit metamorphosed by the following morning, and the rustic attire of Margaret Inglis was for ever thrown aside. She was a child of great beauty; and, when fully equipped in the new dress, she was a wonder to herself, and could not fail to be an object of admiration to every one that saw her. Lady Grace, as far as dress was concerned, had equally beneficent intentions towards Margaret's twin-brother; but these could not so speedily be put into execution. A tailor had to be sent for and consulted; and, without encroaching upon any prerogative or perquisite appertaining to Sir Norman's man Keith, a cabinet counsel was to be held on sundry obsolete dress-coats and pairs of knee-breeches belonging to the worthy baronet, which had, for the last twenty years, been encouraging moths in a red hair trunk, of the shape of a drum and the depth of a draw-well, which stood in the east garret, serving as a pedestal to another hair trunk of a different colour and a different shape, with a circular lid bulging up, and a small or infant trunk sprouting out of the top like a mushroom; and this small trunk had its own lock, and its own key,

and its own every thing, independent of the parent trunk, with which it was inseparably connected. And in this great-and-small-combined inseparable receptacle, there was a store of curiosities ;—curiosities of dress, curiosities of literature, curiosities of perfumeries in pastes, pomatums, oils, and evaporated washes ; curiosities of wigs ; curiosities of medical science and of surgical practice : which curiosities, if all unpacked and laid out in proper order, would have filled a museum, and taken an inspector no inconsiderable period of human existence to examine.

Now, none of these things were originally curiosities, but had become so by dint of care and keeping. So, if you want an invaluable collection for your heirs, lock up, and stow away. This is the recipe, this is the secret ; it will cost you nothing but the trouble of collecting : time will do the rest. Give nothing away that may possibly be of use, and throw nothing away that can possibly be of none ; and thus your trash will become a treasure. The stoppers of broken bottles, the lids of broken teapots, and the buttons of worn-out garments, though now an eyesore, will in due time be worth the looking at. Another century will work a wonderful revolution in the minds of men regarding them, and every thing else in this ample box of curiosities,—the world.

CHAPTER XI.

“ ————— A native grace
Sat fair proportion'd on her polished limbs.
————— She was Beauty's self,
Recluse amid the close embowering woods.”

THOMSON.

On the night of the children's arrival, Sir Norman Inglis went to bed in bad humour, and rose on the following morning in bad humour, took his breakfast in bad humour, and seemed likely to continue in the same ; so that Lady Grace, who was anxious to study his temper, suspected there was a cause for all this bad humour, and the cause she suspected was, that he was disappointed at his children's not being introduced to him, and she judged it expedient to announce her intention of letting them be seen as soon as the boy had got a suit fit for him to appear in. Sir Norman, who seemed not at all conciliated by this intimation, growled out “ What signifies dress ? ” and looked ten times more out of humour than before.

Lady Grace attempted no farther accommodation to his mood, but let him depart from the breakfast-room without saying another word. The library was a room which Sir Norman did not often occupy long at a time, but he generally made a stage of it on his journeys from the eating rooms to his own private study on the ground floor. On this occasion he repaired thither, according to custom, to select a book and wind up the time-piece which stood over the chimney.

The housemaid was in arrears with her work that morning, and when Sir Norman entered, he caught her, much to his own annoyance and her dismay, in the act of giving the finishing touches to the polishing of the steel grate. Behind her stood, thoughtfully viewing her operations, a little mute figure clad in the coarsest corduroys, of scanty length, displaying bare sunburnt ankles, and dusty iron-heeled shoes, which had never been beholden to Day and Martin.

Jess had ventured to infringe on the established rules of the house. She had brought the dejected little boy with her to amuse him with a sight of the wonders of the book-room. She caught up her duster and flannel rags, and other scouring utensils, and made a hasty retreat on Sir Norman's entrance, dragging little Sandy along with her. Sir Norman took hold of the child and detained him, and carefully closing the library-door after the woman's departure, returned to the middle of the apartment, and stood for a few moments alternately fixing his eyes upon his son's countenance, and upon the portrait of himself, taken at the same age, which hung above the mantel-piece. There perhaps could not have been traced at that moment, even by the most skilful finder-out of resemblances, the most distant one between the father and the son as they then stood ; but it was obvious and identical the likeness between the little boy of nine dressed in light blue with a frill of Valenciennes lace, and an ivory multiplication table in his hand, who sat pensively studying in the dark canvass, surrounded with the rich gilt oval frame, and the little boy of nine, who stood upon the Turkey carpet, in the coarse cor-

duroys and harn shirt collar, and checked napkin tied like a wisp about his neck. The likeness, be it observed, between these two was so glaringly obvious and identical, that Sir Norman stood, as was said before, viewing them alternately with astonishment, and some degree of agitation. Then suddenly quitting hold of his son's hand, he proceeded to a Chinese cabinet on gilt claws, which stood at one end of the room, and from one of its drawers he took out an ivory tablet with the multiplication on one side, and a perpetual calendar on the other. It was the original of the tablet which the little boy above the mantel-piece was studying. Sir Norman presented this as a gift to his son, but found it impossible to articulate the set speech which, as a sort of advice, he meant to deliver as an accompaniment to the present, but bending his tall figure towards the little rustic, he stroked his head and kissed his brow, while he murmured something very like a blessing over him; but he was taken by surprise by the door suddenly opening at that instant, and Miss Tweedie, who was a privileged intruder into all the public apartments, entered with a message about letters and newspapers from Lady Grace. If Sir Norman had been caught in the act of framing a conspiracy against the King and the Commonwealth, he could not have taken more guilt to himself. His face glowed with shame, and his ideas forsook him, and after returning a very complicated and altogether unintelligible reply to his mother's message, he hastened to the seclusion of his own study, where he might indulge without molestation in his own feelings, and in his own reflections.

Sir Norman, however, was not to be allowed long

to enjoy his solitude, for some gentlemen came by chance to spend the day, and he had to talk to them, and walk about with them till dinner, and to play at chess after, and they staid all night and part of the next day, so Margaret Inglis and her brother Sandy could not reasonably be attended to or thought of; and Sir Norman had regained his good-humour in the society of his friends, and probably the circumstance of his children being under his own roof had escaped his memory, for on his return from giving the aforesaid gentlemen a short convoy, on their departure, he entered his mother's boudoir, and there was the venerable lady seated majestically like a Queen-Dowager, and a child beaming with patrician loveliness, dressed out like a little princess and heir-apparent of the throne, seated on a hassock at her feet conning a task in a large spelling-book; and he could not for the life of him make out who the child could be, but starting back in surprise, and wholly forgetting what he intended to tell his mother, he made a hasty retreat to his study, where, by dint of reflection, it occurred to him in the course of time that the little beauty was his own daughter.

Next day—the very day on which the tailor had promised Sandy's suit of the moth-eaten garments, sad consternation was occasioned among the servants below stairs. Sandy had gone out after breakfast with the herd-boy to view some of the lions of the place. The herd-boy came in at two to his dinner, and the other servants were assembling. But Sandy was not there. "Where's little Sandy?" said Mrs MacMartin to the herd-boy.

"I dinna ken," said Geordie.

"Hie Sandy!" cried the amiable superior of the

kitchen, extending her voice to a high pitch, but no Sandy answered.

"Where's Sandy?" again demanded she of the herd-boy, while she looked fiercely at him; but the herd-boy could give no information. Upon which, a general commotion arose among all present, every one inquired where he had taken him to, and where he had seen him last; to which queries Geordie answered that he had been with him in the barns, and the byres, and the stables, and the dog's kennel; and he had seen him last sitting on the granary stairs, and he desired him to go home, while he went to bring in the cows to be milked at mid-day. This account seemed consistent with truth, but it was evident that he had never come home, and all seemed to think that there was a possibility of his still being seated on the granary stairs, although full two hours had elapsed since Geordie saw him there, and one and all of them remorselessly despatched the hungry herd-boy to see if he could find him where he left him; and after a considerable space, Geordie returned from a useless errand, and sat down to his dinner of broth and boiled mutton, which had been served out to him in his own wooden bicker, and had turned cold in his absence; but Geordie was good-natured, and made no complaints, being more of a glutton than an epicure, and he bolted down, with astonishing speed, his mess, just in the dead-throe, congealing fat, waxy potatoes and all, without once threatening to choke, or attempting to offer any vindication or reply, although the whole company put to him alternately, and sometimes all at once, during the progress of his meal, the most distracting and unanswerable interrogations

regarding Sandy, and bestowed upon him as much abuse as if he had been the child's murderer.

Now, in the course of the self-same day, the tailor, punctual to his word, arrived at the back-door of Ingliston, with a black bombazet bag, made out of his wife's old petticoat, containing a wine-coloured suit of moth-eaten superfine cloth, with sugar-loaf gilt buttons, and a starched frill to fold over at the neck, of superb nuns' work, interspersed with modern darnings, and as tender as the tinder of burnt rags.

But, unfortunately, the tailor's punctuality was of no use except to prove his own honour, for the intended wearer of these delectable garments, of which the poor man was as proud as if he had been to wear them himself, was not at hand to get them tried on. It was hoped, however, that the little truant would cast up in the course of time ; and this master tailor, whose business was not so furiously brisk but that he could afford leisure to wait, contentedly took up his quarters under the auspices of Mrs MacMartin, in her room off the kitchen, and communicated a rich store of information from the village to that valuable matron, who repaid him with a delicious meal, called his "four hours," which was a tasteful combination of sweet and strong, rich and rare, to-wit, tea and toast, jam and whisky, veal pie and Westphalia ham, and whisky again, and after all a woodcock that had just come down from table, and which the tailor ate out of courtesy to the cook, for he could not really say that he had any appetite for it, after what he had already taken, and which the cook pressed upon the tailor for this reason, as she informed him, that he might have it in his power

to say that he had once in his life tasted that scarce bird ; and the tailor, who knew nothing about woodcocks, but had the greatest possible deference for Mrs MacMartin and her opinions regarding men and things, was prevailed upon to devour the game, "stump and rump," while his hostess was lecturing upon its rarity ; and he concluded in his own mind, from what she said, that, by accomplishing this feat, he was thereby rendering himself ever afterwards a sort of natural curiosity, or, in other words, according to the slang term, of which he was in blessed ignorance, he was constituting himself a *lion* of the village, by his having eaten a woodcock.

While this delightful scene of social intercourse between Mrs MacMartin and her friend was in progress, instruction being beautifully blended with entertainment, the wine-coloured suit in the bombazet bag had not once oppressed the tailor's memory, and the cook's troubled cogitations regarding little Sandy had subsided into calm reflection, combined with a humble hope that he would appear in time at least to go to bed. But alas, alas ! Marshall was never more to be honoured with a baronet's son for a bed-fellow, and the tailor was never to have the satisfaction of ascertaining whether he had made a right fit of the wine-coloured suit or not, for the day wore away, and the twilight came, and the darkness was approaching, but no tidings of Sandy. The master tailor could wait no longer, but was compelled to take an unsatisfactory leave, and wended his way home, with his empty bombazet bag in his pocket, meditating as he went on Mrs MacMartin, the wine-coloured suit with sugar-loaf buttons, and the woodcock.

Had the servants at Ingliston told Lady Grace the truth at once, it would have been much easier for themselves than to make up a statement, an ill-arranged combination of truth and falsehood, when fear and necessity drove them to it. Every body in the house was in bed or fast posting to it; the windows were secured, the doors were locked, and Miss Tweedie was assisting her mistress to undress, when some reiterated questions regarding the little boy, the tailor, and the new suit, involved Miss Tweedie in the necessity of stating the fact of Sandy having run away, and to screen herself from blame for not having told it sooner, she imagined herself involved in the worse necessity of telling a downright lie, and she said she never had heard of it till that very moment from Watson; and when Watson was rung out of bed, he told another downright lie, and denied ever having spoken on the subject to Miss Tweedie, or that he knew any thing about the matter, and he landed all the blame on Marshall; and Marshall being called up out of bed next in order, was not loath to roll over the blame on the broad shoulders of Mrs MacMartin; but Mrs MacMartin, who was forthwith ordered up to answer for herself, positively refused to rise out of bed for any such purpose, for which piece of contumelious conduct, a warning to depart at the next term was sent to her on the instant, by the mouth of her calumniator Marshall.

Lady Grace having rung the bells, scolded, threatened, and asked questions till she was tired, went to bed and fell asleep. So the matter ended for that night.

Lady Grace rose the following morning, refreshed with seasonable rest, and rung the bells again,

scolded, threatened, and asked questions in the same order as she had done the night before, and the servants repeated over again the falsehoods of the preceding evening, with many important additions and amendments; but all this only darkened the mystery of the little boy's absence.

To ascertain, therefore, if he had gone home to his mother and to save reflections, a man and horse were ordered off to the Greenmill. The Greenmill was distant upwards of twenty miles. It was a small village consisting of a few scattered houses, occupied chiefly by weavers, and through the midst of it ran a rough stream, across which was a narrow stone-bridge. At one end of the bridge stood a huge, dull mass of building, covered with red tiles; and this manufactory was the chief feature in the picture, and the source from which the inhabitants derived their subsistence, and the village its designation.

It was late in the afternoon when the Ingliston messenger arrived; and, at the identical moment when he had crossed the bridge, and was beginning to look to the right and left, and make inquiry where the residence of Sandy's mother was, a little urchin caught his eye turning the corner of the large, grave pile of building. He had just emerged from the small counting-room at the gable end of the factory, where a surly clerk, seated within the rails at his desk like a wild beast in a cage, had paid into his hand the sum of ten pence in copper, for some work. With these clenched in his two fists, he was hastening home in glee to his mother with this reward of her labours, when he met full in view, and within a few paces of him, the man from Ingliston. He started back; a cloud came over his joyous countenance in

an instant, and, without allowing the person who had come in search of him a moment's opportunity to accost him, he darted off in an opposite direction with the speed of a started hare, and disappeared. To follow him was out of the question, nor did the man make the attempt. He thought his having caught a glimpse of him safe and sound, was at least a point gained in the mean time, and he forthwith repaired to the public house of the village, put up his horse, took some refreshment, and then sallied out on his mission.

He found the cot-house at the end of the town, where the child's mother dwelt. The poor woman was at home alone, expecting her little boy's return with her earnings from the factory. After the first moments of surprise at sight of the stranger, a few inquiries ensued, and a brief explanation, by which the Ingliston messenger learnt that the child had arrived, much to the astonishment of every one in the place, on the night before at a late hour, so much worn out after his journey on foot, that his mother thought he would have been unable to leave his bed next day, but instead of that he was as brisk as a bee in the morning, having entirely recovered from his fatigue, and had been more than ordinarily active in assisting her in her avocations.

It was a question for the boy himself to decide whether he would return again to Ingliston.

The mother hinted that he liked home better, but with the caution natural to needy people, who are afraid to commit themselves when their own interests are concerned, she took care not to give her own opinion as to whether he ought to be sent back or not. The Ingliston messenger sat till he was

tired, and till the poor woman was tired of his company, but Sandy made not his appearance. Upon which the man returned to the public-house, where he was to remain all night, and promised to call in the morning before taking his journey homewards.

Meanwhile Sandy, who, at sight of the courier that had been sent after him, was desperately alarmed that he should be taken by main force and carried back to Ingliston, fled to an old lime-kiln in the neighbourhood of the village, and hid himself among its ruins. Impelled by fear when it was growing dark, he crept out of his hiding-place and returned to his mother's cottage. His mother told him what had passed, and the intention of Sir Norman's servant to call next morning. This piece of information made a deep impression on the little fellow. He went to bed, but slept none, and as soon as daylight appeared, he rose, stole out, and retraced his steps to the old ruins, skulked about there till the day was far advanced, and then, impressed with an idea that the man would be away, and urged by the calls of hunger, he ventured out, and, with slow hesitating movements, sometimes advancing, sometimes retrograding, reached his mother's house and his mother's side, and learnt from his mother's lips that he was now free, and needed to be in hiding no longer, for his persecutor had taken the road, and was by that time many a mile distant. Thus ended Lady Grace Inglis's attempt to patronise her grandson. Frowning with offended dignity when the servant told how he had fled at sight of him, and kept himself in hiding, she, in her own mind, pronounced him to be an ungrateful, hopeless, little reprobate; and a quick penetrator into

people's thoughts, might have judged by the look of stern determination which settled on her ladyship's countenance, while she maintained a portentous silence, that she was at that moment passing a solemn mental act, excluding the undutiful young scamp from all favour in her lifetime, and all part or interest in her effects at her death.

This little master, having proved himself so unworthy of countenance, was abandoned to his own resources, while the case of the little girl was much more promising. With great tractability and obedience, she learnt what was required of her, and, in the course of time, became a useful and ready assistant to Lady Grace.

Years passed away. The rusticity of Margaret's early education wore off; her natural beauty improved as she grew in stature, and at the age of seventeen, she was perhaps as lovely a scion of the old stock of the Inglises as any generation of them ever could have boasted of. Although kept in a perfectly subordinate station by Lady Grace, she was entrusted with many matters confidentially, and in a way in which the old lady would never have condescended to entrust a mere servant; and she was sometimes sent to the village to execute commissions which Lady Grace wished to be done with privacy or trust-worthy exactness.

One day, when sent on an errand of this sort, she had to call at the village inn to get some mistake rectified, and to settle a bill which was due there for postages.

She was detained for some length of time till the matter was adjusted, and she seated herself at the window of the front parlour into which she was

shewn, and amused herself by looking out into the street. While waiting there, a carriage with very dashing liveries drove up to the door, and a portly gentleman, apparently about forty-five, having a noble appearance and a high military air, alighted from it and stepped into the inn.

His eye caught a glimpse of the beautiful young creature seated at the inn window. An eager inquiry regarding her was made by him at the landlady, who received him at the entrance-door, and a hurried answer, conveyed in a few significant words, put him in possession at once of Margaret's genealogy. He meditated an introduction of himself into her company without ceremony; but the master of the house having by this time settled with her the business that she had come about, was in the act of shewing her out at the room-door, and she passed by the stranger in the lobby, and proceeded on her way homewards.

The gentleman, who was on his way to visit some families in that part of the country, with great precipitation took his seat again in his carriage, and commanded his servants to drive to Ingliston. In a short space they overtook the young pedestrian, who had crossed over to the shady side of the road to screen herself from the scorching heat of the sun. The gentleman called out to the postilion to stop, and Margaret very naturally and very innocently looked round at the vehicle, which halted at her side.

"Is Sir Norman at home?" cried Colonel Gilbert, with the air of an acquaintance.

"Yes, sir," replied Margaret.

"I hope that he and Lady Grace are well?"

"Pretty well, I thank you, sir," said Margaret.

"Any company at Ingliston?" again inquired he.

"No, sir, except Mr Stirling the factor, and his clerk Mr Gowans."

"Is that all, my sweet girl?" rejoined the Colonel smiling. "I am going to pay your father a visit," added he. And at this remark of the Colonel, the blood mounted to Margaret's face. She felt an indescribable pleasure at hearing Sir Norman styled her father, for she had never heard him called so before since she came to Ingliston, and she was strictly prohibited by Lady Grace from claiming any relationship to the family whatever. Pleased, therefore, and gratified, at being recognised by this distinguished stranger as Sir Norman's child, the sensation of fear and timidity which she felt on being first accosted, wore off.

"This is a fatiguing walk for you," said the Colonel. "Will you not take the advantage of a ride home?"

Margaret hesitated at this invitation. Nothing of its impropriety, however, occurred to her, but fear of what Lady Grace would say if she complied was the idea that came uppermost. The stranger was evidently paying her more attention than she ever considered herself entitled to, and much more than Lady Grace would have been willing for her to receive.

The invitation was again given. Margaret hesitated; refused first, and then accepted; and it was not till she was fairly seated beside the stranger, that she began to fear she had done wrong, and especially when she heard him give to the man who opened the carriage-door some directions in a foreign lan-

guage, which to her were quite unintelligible. And her fears increased when, instead of turning in at the porter's-lodge, she was driven rapidly past it.

"That is our lodge; you are passing the gate, sir," cried Margaret in some alarm.

"Never mind that," replied the stranger. "I have ordered them to drive round by the east approach.

"It is miles about," said Margaret earnestly. "You have no idea what a very long way it is."

"It will seem short in your sweet company," cried the Colonel, clasping the innocent, unsuspecting creature in his arms, and kissing her.

Margaret screamed faintly, extricated herself, and then burst into tears.

"You are *no* gentleman," said she, sobbing in the bitterness of her heart. "I wish I had not come with you. I will tell Lady Grace."

"And what will you tell her, my sweet one?" said the Colonel with a provoking laugh, whilst she, in real anguish of spirit, wept still more bitterly, both at what she was subjected to, and at the dread of her grandmother's anger at her conduct.

"Compose yourself, my dear," said Colonel Gilbert soothingly. "Why are you so childish? Why should you be afraid? Let me dry those sweet tears. I am your father's friend and your own friend, believe me. My beautiful creature, I would not injure you for the world."

"Then let me out, sir, that I may walk home," cried Margaret, who was half-flattered by this speech, and would almost have been reconciled to the Colonel's company, but her heart began to beat with real trepidation when she thought of Lady Grace's

displeasure at seeing her drive up to the door in this stranger's carriage ; for Lady Grace did every thing to keep her humble, and in full remembrance of her dependent station, and many mortifying rebuffs did she endure before strangers, into whose presence Lady Grace often thoughtlessly and unfeelingly brought her, and just as if to make her feel that she was not entitled to be there.

"Oh, let me out, sir," cried she again, in a voice of entreaty, while unaffected anxiety was depicted in her countenance, and the tears chased each other rapidly down her cheeks. And these were tears occasioned by conflicting feelings ;—tears of shame and of wounded pride ; tears of fear and apprehension ; tears of bitter repining at her unfortunate state of hopeless dependence, for she had a mind which, with cultivation, would have fitted her to adorn the high station to which her birth might have entitled her, as well as it seemed to preclude her from it. There was the blood of the Inglises, and nobler blood than theirs, in her heart and veins ; nay, too much of it for her own happiness. And there shone out in her pensive countenance something that spoke of checked and withered feelings, and of high youthful aspirings for ever crushed by the chilling restraints under which they were kept.

"Will you please to let me out that I may walk?" entreated Margaret again, while her agitation was increasing. "Lady Grace will be very, very angry."

"Never mind cross old granny," cried the stranger. "Faith, I see by your eye you will rule them all yet. You'll be mistress yourself. Is not that the case?" And the Colonel attempted another familiar caress, which, together with his language, to-

tally nonplussed and confounded his inexperienced companion.

But though shocked and hurt at his familiarity, and surprised at the unceremonious way in which he spoke of Lady Grace, a being whom she was taught to look up to and reverence, those that know the fallacies of the human heart will not wonder that strange, inexplicable, unutterable ideas of personal aggrandisement floated through her imagination, and almost reconciled her to the stranger. A few minutes of silence ensued, the Colonel only whispering, from time to time, an expression of admiration. The east porter's lodge was by this time in view.

"Now," said Margaret, "I must alight and walk home."

"And why should you walk, my pretty little creature," said the Colonel in a soft flattering tone, "when I am going the same road, and will deliver you safe and sound to your grandmama, that she may scold you?" And as he spoke, the gate of Ingliston was opened by the porter, and the carriage drove through.

Margaret's heart beat with fear, and if there was a passing feeling of satisfaction as the Colonel proceeded with his soft flatteries, by which her girlish vanity was gratified in any respect, terror at the prospect of facing Lady Grace overcame it all, and the more so from the consciousness that she was culpable in submitting, for one instant, to the impertinent freedoms of this stranger.

"I must be let out," cried she, with desperate earnestness, and making an effort to open the carriage-door, and let herself out, while the Colonel held her back and remonstrated.

"Mr Gowans, Mr Gowans!" exclaimed she, stretching herself half out at the window, as she saw that gentleman proceeding along the avenue at a quick pace; "Mr Gowans, will you, for goodness' sake, help me to get out."

"Miss Inglis!" exclaimed Mr Gowans, with looks of surprise, turning round and desiring the postilion to stop, while Margaret continued to utter expressions indicative of fear, and of her anxiety to be released.

"Who are *you*, sir, that dares to stop my progress?" bellowed the Colonel, whose face was swollen with rage. "Who are *you*, sir, pray?"

"I am nobody of consequence," replied Mr Gowans calmly, while he approached the door of the carriage; "but undistinguished as I am, I must take it upon me to insist that this young lady be allowed to alight, and if you persist in detaining her against her will, I have it in my power to report the circumstance to Sir Norman Inglis, whose resentment will be a more serious matter than the interference of an insignificant person like me."

"You are an impudent scoundrel," growled the Colonel, quitting his hold of Margaret, while Gowans opened the carriage-door, and lifted her out in an instant; and the Colonel drove on, uttering oaths and imprecations, which were lost in the noise of the carriage-wheels. But he wished from his soul that he had not been within the precincts of Inglis-ton, or he never should have prosecuted his visit there; but to turn now, when in the very avenue, would be a cowardly retreat, and he was not to be browbeat by a paltry fellow like Gowans.

CHAPTER XII.

"Invenies alium, si te hic fastidit."

"A little lowly hermitage it was,
Down in a dale hard by a forest side,
Farre from resort of people that did pass."
SPENCER.

Colonel Gilbert's equipage was soon out of sight among the trees, leaving Mr Gowans and his companion far in the rear.

Gowans gave Margaret his arm, and they proceeded leisurely towards the house, the latter, in all her eagerness, telling the history of her little adventure with the Colonel, whom, by the way, Mr Gowans did not know, and never had seen before.

Mr Gowans had always with admiration regarded Margaret Inglis, whom, from his being, as he styled himself; a person of no consequence, he had frequent opportunities of seeing, Lady Grace often allowing, nay, commanding her to remain in the public room, when he was there; and his admiration of her as a beautiful child was now maturing into a deep, lasting, and devoted attachment; but he never had expressed it.

His whole conduct towards her was only that of respectful attention, and his partiality for her, even when a child, had never been evinced in any way, but by bringing her, from time to time, some elegant and useful little present; and now, when she was arrived at more mature years, he did not forget his accustomed gift, which was generally a book;—no collection of sentimental tales or sonnets, but some solid standard work, done up in an elegant style.

On the present occasion he had not neglected his present, but had not had an opportunity till now of bestowing it. It was one of a series of religious works, bound uniformly with those he had already given her ; and when he presented it, he ventured in stronger language than he had done before to express his regard, and his expressions of regard were not unmingled with earnest wishes, uttered in an almost admonitory tone, that she would cultivate and enrich her mind with that knowledge and those attainments which alone produce happiness, and which alone will remain when all other knowledge and all other attainments shall have passed away. But there was either a shyness or indifference in Margaret's manner, which was not at all encouraging, and the conversation passed off to casual remarks on subjects of no interest.

When there is no guilt there needs to be no concealment. Margaret felt no dread of Lady Grace's anger, as she walked arm in arm with Mr Gowans to the house, and they separated in the entrance-hall, she proceeding to Lady Grace's private apartments, and Mr Gowans to the parlour.

Margaret, not finding Lady Grace, who was in the drawing-room with visitors, went to her own sitting apartment, which she shared in common with Mrs Logan, an English widow, who had come as a superintending servant, and as lady's maid, in the room of Miss Tweedie, who was now married. She was an exceedingly clever, pretty young woman, who had seen much of the world, but not much of what was most improving to the mind and morals.

She had travelled on the Continent with a lady of quality, and had long resided there. She had an

insinuating manner, which at first made Lady Grace doubtful of her, but at length she worked her way to the heart of the old lady, who grew extremely fond of her, and Margaret was left much to her society.

Several other unexpected guests had come that day to dinner besides Colonel Gilbert, and he had got into good humour again by being most cordially welcomed, and invited to prolong his stay by Sir Norman and his mother. He had sufficient effrontery to get the better, in a short space, of his disagreeable rencontre with Mr Gowans, whom he saw without any uneasiness, occupying his silent place near the bottom of the table ; and although, in some respects, greatly disappointed, he was still more at his ease, when he observed that Miss Inglis did not appear at all.

As she had been the sole and entire motive for his coming at that time to Ingliston, he was nothing loath to prolong his visit, from day to day, in hopes of meeting with her again ; and he did it the more readily that the pragmatistical clerk, Mr Gowans, had taken his departure the day after his arrival. Meantime Margaret, both from pride and propriety, kept out of the way, which she could the more easily do as several persons of distinction were in the house, and Lady Grace was fully occupied with them, and was obliged to dispense with the company of her pretty grandchild, who was in the habit of working beside her, under her superintendence, or reading aloud to her for her entertainment, so she was almost entirely thrown upon the society of Mrs Logan.

"Well, Miss Margaret," said Mrs Logan, one day entering her own apartment, where Margaret was at work ; "well, Miss Margaret," said she, holding

up exultingly a piece of gold in her hand, "I think Colonel Gilbert is the genteelest man that comes about the house. See what he has given me, and just for putting a couple of stitches or so in his glove. What a scrubby set are these Weirhams and Douglasses; they never shew a copper among the servants, though they keep them running from morning till night serving them."

"But how came you to know that Colonel Gilbert's glove wanted mending?" said Margaret, looking up from her embroidery.

"Why, to be sure, his valet Monsieur de Lancy told me; and he told me more than that, Miss," said Mrs Logan, with an arch look at her young friend, who again raised her eyes anxiously and pensively from her work, for she seldom entered into any thing like mirthful talk with her volatile companion Mrs Logan.

"Aye, he told me more than that the Colonel's glove wanted a stitch. I see you are a sly one, and can keep your own secret," said the lady's maid, laughing as she beheld Margaret's countenance glow with shame and anxiety; while attempting to appear unconcerned she replied, "I have no secrets to keep, I do not understand you, Mrs Logan."

"I daresay you do not, Miss Margaret, and you did not understand the Colonel either, I suppose, when he fell in love with you at the village, and would have you into his chariot, reason or none."

"Oh, Mrs Logan," cried Margaret, dropping her work from her hands, and bursting into tears. "Do not, I beseech you, tell Lady Grace that I was so foolish as to go into his carriage. He must be a wicked, designing man. Do not be tempted with

his money. But oh! will you promise not to tell Lady Grace?"

"What a silly child you are, after all, to cry for what you should rather be proud of. No fear of me telling my lady. I know what to tell her and what to keep to myself too well for that; and see that you don't be blabbing that I have got a guinea from him. But what makes you cry, you silly thing? De Lancy told me of the fuss you made upon the road. I cannot help laughing when I think of it, I wonder that the Colonel did not knock down that low fellow Gowans. But, to be sure, a man of his rank would not have degraded himself by shewing resentment to such a poor pitiful creature. But upon my word you was a real fool, you might have played your cards better. The Colonel has six thousand a-year, and has a place like a paradise, I understand, and spends his fortune like a gentleman. Your fortune might have been made had you conducted yourself more wisely. It is not every day one makes such a conquest; and as unlikely matches have taken place before now. But, perhaps, we could manage matters yet. You might redeem your character with the Colonel if you saw him again. De Lancy says he is just dying for you, and that neither more nor less is keeping him about the place, for he literally abhors Lady Grace with all her pomposity, and he is wearied out of his life with Sir Norman's tedious discourse; and now that the Douglasses are away, it is not likely that he will remain by himself to be bored to death by them two, and you are the only attraction. I could put you upon a plan. I think we could manage an interview with him."

"Never! never!" cried Margaret indignantly, rising from her seat, and brushing away the remainder of the tears which still sparkled upon her blushing cheeks, now red with indignation. "Do not name such a thing to me again. I am certain he is a bad man, and though he had all the riches in Britain I could not love him."

"There is no danger of your not loving him, for all these sentimental airs," cried Mrs Logan laughingly, and pretending to ridicule her. "If you'll but calmly consider, Miss," continued she in a mortifying tone of commiseration and advice; "if you'll but calmly consider how dependent your grandmama keeps you, and what a poor prospect you have if she were gone; I think if I were in your place I would pluck up a spirit, and try and better myself. I would not live, as the saying is, and be neither fish nor flesh in a house."

Mrs Logan had touched upon a tender string. She had broached a subject on which Margaret was exquisitely sensitive, and although her speech was any thing but affecting, it came so home to poor Margaret, that she was again dissolved in tears, and seemed humbled to the dust.

A mandate from Lady Grace for her woman to attend her broke up the conference, and the unhappy girl was left alone to indulge in her tears, and to lament her uncomfortable prospects; but there was a principle of rectitude in her heart which made her spurn and detest the evil counsel of her dangerous associate.

It was with real joy that Miss Inglis heard in a day or two after this that the Colonel was making preparations to depart. She had studiously avoided

mentioning his name ; and Mrs Logan, who was rather in a sulky humour, never broached the subject. But all the time, Margaret had really punished herself for fear that she might encounter him. She had given up her long solitary romantic walks which she used to take ; she had feigned indisposition to Lady Grace that she might have a plea for remaining secluded in her chamber, and she rejoiced that this season of restraint was nearly over.

“ Well, it is a pity, after all, when people do not know what is for their own interest,” said Mrs Logan one Sunday evening after a long silence, during which time Margaret had been apparently engrossed with a book, and her companion, with restless step and wandering eye, had gone from one window to another, at a loss how to amuse herself on that tedious evening. “ But I am not going to upbraid you, Miss,” continued she ; “ you may live to repent that you did never take my advice, and that will be sufficient punishment, without my casting it in your teeth. But if you are not too much taken up with your book, what would you think of breathing a little fresh air to pass the time till supper ? I am tired to death cooped up in this dull place. Upon my word, it is enough to make one hypochondriac. Will you take a stroll down to the hermitage at the water-side ? ”

Margaret was not averse to the proposal, for she felt something of ennui herself, although she did not own it, and she had been in a sort of dreamy state, dozing over her book for the last half hour unconscious of what she was reading. She equipped herself cheerfully for the little excursion, while Mrs Logan hurried down stairs to give some directions

to the servants before she went out, and, returning without delay, the two set out upon their rambles.

Although a vast proportion of the Ingliston estate was barren and uncultivated, the grounds to a wide extent in the vicinity of the house were in a highly improved condition. The natural beauties of the place all around the site of the mansion were particularly favourable for this, and Sir Norman had taken advantage of it, and every improvement that his taste, which was an exquisite one, dictated, no expense was spared to accomplish. It was when strolling about in the beautiful woods and lawns of Ingliston that Margaret Inglis pictured to herself an ideal world of enjoyment, and love, and light-hearted liberty. It was there that she sometimes felt as queen and mistress of the place, and she would revel in imagination in the shadowy glories of her fancied state, when she might be the dispenser of happiness to the many who would necessarily be dependent on her favour and bounty; but in another moment truth, stern truth, like a thunder-cloud, came rolling over the bright heaven which shone around and within her, and then all was dark, confused, and terrible, and she shrunk into nothingness at the melancholy altered picture, and would dissolve into tears at the recollection of her own hopeless aspirations.

The house of Ingliston was a vast irregular pile of the Gothic order. It was not lofty, but occupied a large area, and at the back part the building enclosed on three sides a wide court or square, and two double rows of closely-set ancient beeches cut straight like a hedge, and almost as high as the gables to which they run parallel, formed the boun-

daries of a bowling-green, with which the paved court in the centre of the building communicated, by means of a flight of steps running the whole width of the court. These high beech inclosures, extending in a straight line to some distance, widened circularly, and the trees then being allowed to grow to their full height, and in their natural form, swept round to right and left to the extent of nearly a mile in both directions, the one to the west leading direct to the toll-road, but the other leading to a series of private walks and avenues which branched off from it. The bowling-green was bounded by an invisible sunk fence, and seemed to extend itself into an interminable lawn of rich pasture, which afforded a spacious range for deer, which Sir Norman took great delight in. This meadow sloped down towards a broad clear stream, on whose opposite banks rose a plantation of irregular height, overtopped by a ledge of high rocks, crowned on the summit with birch and wild shrubs.

To the left of this rocky eminence, which confined the view on one side, the landscape widened into a rich country, which seemed to extend as far as the dark, distant hills that terminated the prospect.

Besides the principal entrances to the mansion of Ingliston, there were several inlets, or private doors, accessible only to the members of the family, or to privileged individuals. To one of these, by Lady Grace's favour, Margaret had a key for her own use. It was a low postern at the extremity of the eastern wing of the house, from which one might make egress and pass off into the woods unobserved, and

without the possibility of being seen from any of the windows.

It was by this way that Margaret and Mrs Logan went out, and directed their steps along the beech-walk, till it branched off in three several directions. They chose the one which led down to the river, and over the river was a picturesque stone-bridge, comparatively new, because erected by Sir Norman, but made to look old by being ornamented with devices the same as those that ornamented the most ancient portion of the house itself. They crossed this bridge, and, turning to the right, pursued their way towards a small rustic building called the Hermitage, which was situated in a natural recess at the base of the rocks, and half hid among the trees and wild bushes which overhung it.

This was a favourite resort of Margaret's, to which, in the summer mornings, she used to repair with her work or her book, and probably the happiest moments of her existence were spent in that romantic little hut, where, without molestation, she could frame to herself an imaginary world of happiness.

Margaret proceeded on before Mrs Logan along the narrow footpath which led to the hermitage, and which was not commodious for two ; and, raising the latch at the rustic door, she went before her companion into the interior, and, with a happy smile, seated herself upon the bench overlaid with moss, and she seemed like one who felt herself arrived at a place of rest and safety.

"Now, is not this a beautiful spot?" said she enthusiastically to Mrs Logan. "Could not you spend your life in such a retreat as this?"

"Not I, indeed," replied Mrs Logan, "I should be terrified out of my wits to be here in the dusk of the evening. It is gloomy and dismal even now, when the sun is so bright. It would be a famous place, though, for an assignation. I really think, Miss Margaret, you have some lover who meets you, otherwise you never would be so fond of coming here alone at all hours, late and early."

Poor Margaret, who took every thing that was said in raillery as a serious imputation, tried to disprove the allegation in an earnest tone of self-vindication.

"You take every thing to heart so," said Mrs Logan laughing. "But you need not be afraid, Miss, I shall not be a tale-bearer to my lady about you, even though your sweetheart should pop in just now, thinking you were alone—" And while she spoke, a passing figure darkened the small diced window, and in stepped Colonel Gilbert.

"Ah! my fair fugitive, are *you* here?" cried he, affecting a tone of surprise, while Margaret was trembling and pale with fright, and the more so as she, in her simplicity, was terrified that Mrs Logan should think it was a designed meeting on her part, while, in reality, that intriguing woman had wiled her out for the very purpose of this interview, and had arranged the meeting beforehand, through the agency of the Colonel's valet De Lancy.

"Do you not recognise your old friend and acquaintance?" said Colonel Gilbert, taking her hand and gently pressing it, while she rose, and seemed like one ready to take flight, and Mrs Logan, at the same time, demurely rose, and made a profound courtesy to the Colonel.

"Sit down, sit down," said he, "I am not going to interrupt your tête à tête. But I hope a third party won't spoil your conversation. There will be room on this bench for me, I think:" and he took his station between the two, and putting his arm round Margaret, gently forced her to resume her seat, and continued with his arm in the same position, and with her hand clasped in his.

"You do us too great an honour, sir, by your condescension," said Mrs Logan, most humbly and modestly; "but I think my absence on the present occasion would be the best of company;" and she made a move as if she intended to withdraw. "Mrs Logan," cried Margaret, in great agitation, "sit still."

"Why, my dear Miss," said Mrs Logan, "if you desire it, I shall, and if agreeable to this gentleman. But I thought, sir, you might wish some confidential talk with this young lady, which I would not for the world be a barrier to."

"How could you leave me, and mislead me?" cried Margaret starting up, while the Colonel still continued to hold her hand. "If Colonel Gilbert has any thing to say which I ought to listen to, he may freely say it in your presence; but if he only means to take the advantage of me, because he knows I am a poor unprotected creature,"——and the tears came to her eyes, as she spoke, and her firmness forsook her, and unable to conclude her sentence, she sunk down again upon the seat.

"Heaven forbid that I should take the advantage of such a beautiful and innocent creature," said the Colonel, apparently affected by her appeal; and he drew her gently to his bosom, and kissed the tears

from off her cheeks. "What makes you so shy and frightened?" continued he, in a soft tone.

"Indeed, sir," interposed Mrs Logan, "I must apologise for Miss Margaret's behaviour. The truth is, and it is only to a friend I am speaking, she is sadly kept in. It is terribly crushing to the spirits of a young person to be prisoned, like a bird in a cage; indeed in worse bondage than the nuns I used to see at Florence."

Mrs Logan's speech gave Margaret time and opportunity to recover her self-possession. The Colonel's arm still encircled her, but so lightly that she scarcely felt its pressure. Her heart mis-gave her for having submitted for a moment to his familiarity. She was aware that she was no match in argument for him and Mrs Logan, and that her only victory was in flight, and she, at the instant when seeming passively to yield, precipitately sprung from her seat, fled from the arbour, and bounding with astonishing quickness along the footpath, was out of sight in a moment.

CHAPTER XIII.

"He saw her charming,
That very moment love
Sprung in his bosom."

THOMSON.

With breathless speed and a beating heart, Margaret pursued her way till she re-entered the house, by the private door, and sought a retreat in her own apartment. Scarcely had she time to compose herself, when a mandate came from Lady Grace order-

ing her attendance in the drawing-room. This again set her heart a-palpitating, the colour rose still higher in her cheeks, and altogether she was in a flutter which could not be concealed when she entered the presence of her grandmother.

Lady Grace was seated on an ottoman, a favourite seat of hers, in the middle of the room. "You have surely been sitting, or sleeping over a fire," said she on her entrance; "Your face is so flushed. What have you been about?"

"I was only running, my lady," replied Margaret, a still deeper pink suffusing her face and neck, as she endeavoured to speak out.

"And have I not told you, times without number," rejoined her ladyship, in a reproving tone, "never to run? You have come into my presence all blowzy like a dairymaid, and out of breath too, you can hardly make an audible answer. Why don't you attend to my injunctions?"

Margaret did not attempt a reply to this, but stood waiting her grandmother's further commands, which proved to be that her ladyship, who had some notion that the Sabbath had not been properly kept, wished to make up for the dereliction of other duties by making her grand-daughter read to her a sermon. After selecting from the books upon the *chauffoniere* the particular volume which Lady Grace wanted, Margaret seated herself, as directed, on a sofa opposite to her ladyship, just at a proper distance for the reading to be heard by her distinctly, without its being too close upon her nerves and organs of hearing.

Lady Grace turned over the contents of the sermon-book herself, and pitched upon a suitable and

proper discourse, entitled "Warnings to the Young," from these words, "My son attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings." But before handing the book to Margaret, she premised at some length a few admonitory reflections which she thought the occasion demanded, calling her grandchild's attention to the subject, and pressing home upon her the necessity of mending her manners, and obeying more to the letter her own manifold precepts and commands. As Lady Grace was in progress of delivering these sentiments, the high colour subsided from Margaret's countenance, leaving her pure complexion scarcely heightened beyond its native delicacy, while her eyes, serious and intelligent, were directed towards her monitress, and bespoke the sincere and heartfelt attention with which she listened to an advice which almost bordered on unmerited reproof.

"And now," said Lady Grace, concluding her lecture, and presenting the book to her respectful auditor, "go on with the sermon, and bear in mind what I have said."

But, ere Margaret could commence, the door opened, and Sir Norman, preceded by a young stranger of elegant figure, in a naval uniform, entered the room.

Lady Grace made a motion of her hand, which Margaret well understood as an order for her to remain, and she kept her seat, and preserving the place pointed out for perusal, she engaged herself with turning over the leaves of the book, while Lady Grace, with a delighted exclamation of surprise, rose to receive the stranger, whom she maternally embraced in her arms.

"My own dear boy Charles ! When did you come home ?" said she.

"Only on Friday," replied the sailor, while his eye glanced towards the person seated on the sofa, whose marked family likeness to the Inglises made it impossible to deny the relationship, and he was evidently expecting an introduction, which, however, Lady Grace did not give, but took no notice, and resumed her seat on the ottoman, and the youth placed himself in a chair close by the sofa on which Margaret sat.

"How well you look Lady Grace," said he with a free and happy air ; "but I think every body looks much better than when I went away. Upon my word, my father and mother look as young again as they used to do."

"Lady Weirham was certainly looking remarkably well the last time I saw her," said Lady Grace, "but won't you have some refreshment ?"

"None, I am obliged to your ladyship ;" replied young Weirham ; "I have just come from a very hospitable board. I have been dining at the manse with Dr Irving. I rode over in the morning to church instead of going to the chapel with my father. I was longing to see the old church of Cul-timuir again."

"Indeed I ought to have been there myself," said Lady Grace, interrupting him, for she thought it necessary to squeeze in an apology for habitual absence from a place of worship ; "but our distance is so great, that one cannot with any degree of comfort get there in time."

"You must not give me credit for being better than I am," rejoined Charles Weirham gaily. "No

doubt I like the old church and Dr Irving, but I had heard of a niece which Mrs Irving has, quite a beauty, and I had some curiosity to see her. She is well enough, to be sure ; very pretty, no doubt ; but she is not quite my style of beauty. She is too fair by far." And his eye rested on the lovely countenance that was at his side. " Fye, Charles ! to confess that that was a motive for taking you to church," said Lady Grace half playfully, and half in earnest. But, anxious to have another opportunity of vindicating her own church-going character, she added, " I think it a great duty to go to church once a-day at least, and in order to make up for my unavoidable absence, I was just about to have a sermon read when you came in."

" Pray, don't let me interrupt you," replied young Weirham ; " I am exceedingly fond of sermons, as of all good things."

" What has become of Colonel Gilbert ?" inquired Sir Norman, which was the first remark he had made since he entered the room.

" Oh ! is Colonel Gilbert here just now ?" cried Charles Weirham. " How glad I am of that. He is a fine fellow. How kind he used to be to me when I was a little boy. I am very fond of the Colonel. But how do he and Mrs Gilbert get on now ? What a strange fantastical being she was. How I used to laugh at her. It was a preposterous alliance, after all."

" Preposterous, indeed," responded Sir Norman.

" Oh, there has been a sad breach there !" said Lady Grace in something of a confidential tone. " We never ask for her now. She has gone to live with her own friends, and they are miserable with

her, I understand. It was a most unhappy marriage indeed." "As all forced, unnatural marriages are," remarked Sir Norman emphatically. "But who was to blame, Sir Norman?" said the young man. "I wonder how people can be so easily led. I think that father, mother, brother, and sisters all in a bunch could never force me to marry against my will."

But before Sir Norman could reply to this, the Colonel had made his entrée.

"Mr Charles Weirham, is it actually yourself?" exclaimed the Colonel, grasping both the young stranger's hands firmly. "When did you arrive? I cannot call you my pretty little boy now as I used to do; I have now to look up to you. You are a head, I daresay, taller than I am."

"Not quite so much as that, dear Colonel," replied the youth; "and I hope I shan't grow any more, for I don't take it as a compliment to be thought tall. Tall people are never very clever."

"My dear fellow," said the Colonel, "if you don't like me to commend you for your height, you must still allow me to call you my pretty boy."

"I like that epithet exceedingly well, I can assure you," cried Charles laughing, "however little I may be entitled to it."

Charles Weirham resumed his seat, and the Colonel, with a look of astonishment, and unable to conjecture the meaning of Margaret's presence, seated himself with some degree of satisfaction on the sofa beside her.

"I fear we are sadly interrupting your devotions, Lady Grace," said young Weirham, fixing his eyes upon Margaret, who had already seemed to him an object of great interest; and he hoped, by alluding

to the subject of the sermon, as he saw the book in her hand, that he might draw out some remark from her, and bring her to take part in the conversation.

"Not at all," said Lady Grace, consulting her watch; "we have abundance of time for the sermon yet, if agreeable to the other gentlemen."

"I was just preparing," continued she, addressing Colonel Gilbert, "to have a sermon read when our dear young friend came in. It was a delightful surprise, no doubt; and I was just explaining to him the inconvenience, and indeed impossibility, of going such a distance to church, but I generally contrive to make up for it by having a sermon read at home."

"A very excellent substitute," replied the Colonel.

"Therefore," continued Lady Grace, "if agreeable to you, we shall go on with it."

"Most agreeable, undoubtedly most agreeable," responded the Colonel.

"What say *you*, Sir Norman," pursued Lady Grace, looking after her son, who had risen suddenly from his seat, and was walking to and fro in a restless manner.

"I understand sermons best when I read them to myself," muttered he, moving towards the door, and eventually making his retreat.

"Now, go on, my dear," said Lady Grace in the kindest tone with which she had perhaps ever before on any occasion addressed her grand-daughter, and Margaret, gratified by the kind and encouraging way in which the order was given, felt less timidity and tremour than she would naturally have done, while she proceeded to obey.

When, with a faltering voice, she had announced

the title of the sermon, and the text, an ill-suppressed smile played around the Colonel's mouth, but he endeavoured to compose his countenance to an expression of exemplary seriousness, and she proceeded with her painful and trying task, clearing her voice now and then, till at length it attained a tolerable degree of firmness. Margaret's voice was soft and melodious, and there was such a propriety in its modulations, dictated by attention to the sense of what she read, and altogether such a natural eloquence in her enunciation, that to listen to her was particularly pleasing to the ears of the auditors. And this accomplishment was not acquired by education, for she had had but few advantages in that respect; and yet the real beauty with which she read the discourse might have put to shame many who have spent much money and much precious time in studying to attain under masters a perfect elocution.

When the difficult, and not altogether appropriate task imposed upon her was accomplished, she closed the book, and was about to rise to put it again into its place, when Weirham forestalled her purpose, and relieving her from it, laid it aside upon a table that stood by.

"Very well," said Lady Grace, at the conclusion of the sermon, making a sort of emphatic motion with her head, which seemed a hint to Margaret to withdraw; "that will do," added her ladyship, and Margaret, obeying the indication, rose and moved towards the door.

Charles Weirham hastened to open it for her, and bowing his head as she passed, he closed the door on a being who appeared to him one of inexpress-

sible interest, and, with an expression of real disappointment in his countenance, he returned, and took a seat on the sofa beside Colonel Gilbert. Both continued silent for a short space, and symptoms of chagrin appeared in the looks of both.

Mr Weirham would fain have made inquiry who Margaret was, but he knew Lady Grace's particularity, and how tenacious she was of her own dignity, as if afraid that any one but herself should elicit respect and attention; so he restrained his curiosity till they adjourned to the supper-room, when he found an opportunity then of questioning the Colonel.

"What sweet girl was that that read such a pretty lecture to us?" said he in an under tone.

"Is she not a magnificent creature?" replied the Colonel; and in a suppressed voice, he conveyed to his young friend an answer to his query. "I wonder how the deuce," continued Colonel Gilbert, "Lady Grace can have the conscience to keep her in the back ground; she is the most fitted of any one I ever saw in the house to ornament the halls of Ingliston.

"It is impossible that so much beauty *can* remain in obscurity," replied Charles warmly, while his heart was already glowing with enthusiastic zeal to advocate her cause, and claim for her that place in society to which her loveliness seemed to entitle her.

The entrance of Sir Norman cut short the colloquy, and Lady Grace advanced towards them from the other end of the room, where she had been giving directions to one of the servants regarding the arrangement of something on the supper-table; and they all sat down to supper, and that meal passed

off languidly enough, as is generally the case when people are not very hungry, and not in very good humour.

Colonel Gilbert, as had been previously arranged by him, took his departure the following morning ; but Charles Weirham, contrary to his original intention, prolonged his stay.

On a youth of such ardent and enthusiastic temperament as Charles, and who, after a long probation at sea, had but newly returned to the charms of female society, a person of far inferior attractions than Margaret Inglis might have made a strong impression ; but as the case stood, her face and form of matchless beauty at once dazzled the young sailor, and the bright image became so impressed on his mind, that it occupied his thoughts both in his sleeping and waking hours ; and Charles was not disposed to keep this passion of his a dead secret from the object of it, for he sought, and was not long of finding an opportunity of rapturously expressing to herself all his admiration and love.

After the departure of Colonel Gilbert, Margaret kept herself no longer confined to her apartment, nay, she rather gladly took every opportunity of absenting herself from the company of Mrs Logan. Her former solitary walks were resumed, and Charles Weirham soon found out her resorts. And was she to be blamed when she saw a noble, generous youth, of exquisite manly beauty kneel before her, uttering his impassioned vows of love,—was she to be blamed for loving too, and yielding her heart, nay more, promising the hand, which he ardently and honourably solicited ?

Human prudence might have suggested caution

and delays in making promises ; but human prudence could not, in the very nature of things, have prevented her young heart from responding to his, with all the thrilling delight of a pure and glowing attachment.

CHAPTER XIV.

" Ask what is human life ?

* * *
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,

* * *
A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care."

COWPER.

The premature engagement of the young lovers was of course to be kept a profound secret from the friends of both parties.

For Charles Weirham to have announced such an attachment to his family would have been perfectly out of the question, and it would have been still more preposterous for Margaret to have named it to hers. But, in a few years, when Charles would be his own master, he would then, he assured her, make no concealments, but would glory to place her in that sphere which she was eminently calculated to adorn.

This event formed a new era in the history of Margaret Inglis.

It gave to her new notions, new feelings, new hopes, and ideas respecting herself, which never would otherwise have arisen in her mind ; but though she had many reveries of ideal and prospective felicity, her happiness in the mean time was not really increased thereby. The jurisdiction which Lady Grace

exercised over her did not now seem so much a discipline to which it was her duty to submit ; but it began to assume, in her estimation, the character of an unjust tyranny, which it was her miserable misfortune to be obliged to suffer. She, however, looked forward confidently and with exultation, in all the buoyancy of youthful hope, to the time when she should triumphantly rise above it all. Charles Weirham became an almost constant visitor at Ingliston.

Sir Norman Inglis's chief amusement and occupation was painting in oils. He was a first-rate amateur artist, and so enthusiastically devoted to the study, that he seldom concerned himself with what was going on in the family ; consequently, the entertainment of visitors devolved chiefly on his mother, and in the summer season, they had abundance of guests from all quarters, for it is a remarkable fact, that, however little esteemed or beloved people may be, they will always have plenty of visitors, as long as they have plenty to give. So the substantial comforts which the mansion of Ingliston afforded, made it generally a place of resort to selfish people, who cared little or nothing for their entertainers, but who liked to visit and enjoy the ease and luxurious living which cost themselves nothing.

Lady Grace never for a moment suspected the motive which brought young Weirham so constantly to the house. Indeed, her knowledge of human nature was so limited, and her notions of propriety so ultra, that she could as soon have believed, nay, a vast deal sooner, that Charles had fallen in love with herself, which would have been suitable to his own rank, and that was all the suitableness that she ever

thought of, than ever have taken it into her head that such a sensible, prudent young man could have been guilty of anything so preposterously absurd as to form an attachment to a girl who was in fact NOBODY.

But the sharp, experienced eye of Mrs Logan saw a vast deal farther than the dim sight of her venerable mistress. She soon found out Margaret's secret, and was not long of acquainting her that she had made the discovery. Margaret could not deny the fact. Her whole manner, her eye, her voice, her cheeks, would have betrayed the truth, even if her tongue had attempted to falsify the charge.

The only resource was in tears and earnest entreaties that she would not betray her to Lady Grace. And oh! how was she humbled to be thus in the power of a servant, and especially of one whom she had just reason to dislike and distrust? And how did it frustrate her plan of requesting Lady Grace to allow her an apartment exclusively to herself? for she had a most cordial distaste for Mrs Logan's society, which aversion she had not at all times sufficient prudence to conceal.

But now, in common discretion, she must submit to her company, or run the risk of making her her decided enemy; and she was at best but a very dubious friend. Mrs Logan was not insensible to Margaret's dryness of manner, and she was at times not quite free from some feelings of resentment at the slight; but, fortunately, there was more of good nature than malevolence in her, otherwise she might have rendered the life of her young associate sufficiently miserable.

As matters stood, she had, by her discovery of the passion of Miss Inglis for Charles Weirham, acquired, as it were, the whip-hand over her ; and of this she was quite aware, but, though she often uttered threats when Margaret was petulant, she did not exercise her power as she might.

She was not so much an ill-natured and vindictive member of society, as she was a dangerous, insidious companion, and as she had a wonderful sympathy for people in love-concerns, and would not willingly thwart them, it would have been the very joy of her heart, and the very element in which all her energies would have had full play and acquired double vigour, had she been employed on the present occasion to manage an intrigue and an elopement.

"I think, Miss Margaret," said she one day, when Margaret, in a very melancholy mood, was seated on a sofa in her parlour, and unable to fix her attention to any thing. The work she was engaged with had dropped from her hands, and she was evidently in deep and sad meditation. "I think, Miss Margaret, that Colonel Gilbert would make a kinder husband and as handsome, though not so young quite as that sea-officer of yours. It strikes me you will repent not giving the Colonel proper encouragement."

"What do you mean, Mrs Logan?" cried Margaret, rousing herself and catching up her work, to which she seemed to apply herself assiduously. "You seem to take a pleasure in teasing me. What makes you talk of Colonel Gilbert? You surely forget he is a married man?"

"What signifies that?" answered her adviser.

"He is as good as single. He has parted from his lady, and, old crab that she is, it is to be hoped she won't live for ever: and then, I am sure, the Colonel will not lose a day in marrying whoever he takes a fancy to. And what a lucky woman *she* will be!"

Margaret Inglis was no match in conversation for Mrs Logan, and whether to take this in jest or earnest, she was utterly at a loss. So, for fear of committing herself, or subjecting herself to raillery which she was not able to parry, she remained silent and allowed Mrs Logan to proceed.

"Aye, I see you are beginning to take some thought about it," continued Mrs Logan, persevering with the subject, "and I wish you may not have to take it more to heart yet. You will be the FORSAKEN ONE by-and-by, when that young gallant of yours joins his ship again; and then, like a lone widow you will be. Poor, forlorn Margaret will have to wait and watch for the chances of many a long stormy day and night till he return, and that may never be; and if he do return, he may have forgotten that there ever was such a pretty girl in the world as poor Miss Margaret Inglis. Well, I did not really mean to vex you," added she, as she saw the colour fade from Margaret's cheek, while she sunk back upon her seat. "I did not mean to vex you," again cried she, catching her in her arms and applying her vinaigrette to her nostrils. "Come, now, never mind what I said. Let me lay you lengthwise on the sofa, and you will soon revive. There, now,—take another smell." And Margaret, whom she stretched upon the couch, drew a long breath and reopened her eyes.

“Did a bell not ring just now?” inquired Margaret, looking round confusedly.

“No, my dear, it is just some noise in your ears. But you are better now. Never mind what I said; I was only making a jest. Will you take a little drop of wine? It will do you good.” And Mrs Logan hastened to her cupboard, and poured out the remains of a bottle of Frontignac. Margaret sat up to swallow the wine, and she seemed to revive; but there was a weight hanging about her heart which Mrs Logan’s cordial could not remove, and which her remarks tended to make more oppressive and insupportable.

The agonizing thoughts of parting with the object of her affections,—the being who had been to her as the inspirer of new life and energy,—the being, for whose sake it seemed to her that every trial she now suffered, or might in time to come be called upon to endure, was absolutely nothing, if repaid by his love,—was a parting which she was not able to contemplate, and yet she knew it was inevitable.

His leave of absence, which had, at his request, been prolonged for three months beyond the first period granted, was nearly expired.

A few short weeks, and the being to whom she had yielded all the affections of her heart would be separated from her by land and sea. She would not even have the satisfaction of correspondence by letter.

She could not venture upon that without detection. She never had received a letter in her life from any one. She could not have dispatched or received letters without some confidant; and to have

enlisted any servant or underling as an agent in a transaction of that sort, was what her natural feelings would decidedly have shrunk from. In fact, it would have appeared to her a crime of the first magnitude.

Overwhelmed with reflections which were too harassing either for her health or peace of mind, she seemed the very victim of despair and melancholy. Her appetite forsook her, and sleep scarcely ever visited her eyes, and her pallid, emaciated appearance might have been a matter of anxious concern to any one who saw her, but there was none to take an affectionate interest in her welfare, and unnoticed and unheeded she might have drooped and died.

Lady Grace did once remark, that she was thinner, and not looking so well as usual, but attributed it to tight-lacing and late hours, and she commanded Mrs Logan to lock up her books, that she might not sit up reading at night, and ordered her to see that she wore no corsets to injure her health. These directions Mrs Logan promised to obey; but she knew better the cause of Margaret's unhappiness, and as she really felt some degree of uneasiness at seeing the young creature so much affected, she was anxious to propose a remedy.

"Now," said she one evening when the two were seated together at their coffee, "you need have no secrets with me, who have done so much to befriend you; but drink your cup of coffee, and don't be holding it in your hand till it is as cold as ice, and not fit to take. You are quite an inexperienced girl, nor can you learn any thing from your grand-

mother, so that it is only one such as I, that has seen something of the world, that can give you a bit of advice. I wonder Mr Weirham has not been here for nearly three weeks. You know it is now drawing near the time of his departure. Nay, don't fall a shaking, and spill the coffee on your silk gown. I mean to say nothing that will hurt your feelings. I was only going to ask you—to be sure you may think it is no business of mine, but I was only going to ask if he has ever talked of marriage to you, or is it only a little flirtation which you and he have had, as is most innocent and natural for young people?"

This might seem a simple question, and one easily answered, to so experienced a hand as Mrs Logan, but to Miss Inglis it was a query so astounding, that she found it utterly impossible to articulate a reply. There was a visible trembling over her whole frame, and she was obliged to put the cup which she held in her hand down upon the table.

"I fear, I fear," said Mrs Logan, while she prosecuted her duties at the tray, and poured out another cup of coffee for herself, and one for Margaret, after emptying her former untasted one into the slop basin. "I fear, I fear, when you are so agitated at what I have said, that you are taking too much in earnest what he only means as a little pastime. He has not much in his power, to be sure. He is but the younger son, and I fancy has almost nothing to inherit but pride and poverty. There is a hot cup of coffee for you, but don't cause me to have to throw it among the slops, as you did the last; pray take a piece of cake, and don't be so foolish as to let those trifling things spoil your ap-

petite. There's little danger that Mr Charles would want a meal for your sake, although you are pining and wasting yourself to death on his account."

Margaret passively received the cup and piece of cake that were forced into her hands, and she sat with all the feelings of a condemned criminal, and totally unable to find utterance.

"Now, do take your coffee," insisted Mrs Logan, while she sipped her own, "and help yourself to more cream and sugar if it wants them. I had no intentions in asking you the simple question which I just now proposed, but to put you upon your guard. Many young men, sailors particularly, fall in love with every body they see, and think no more of it; and if Mr Weirham has only flattered and flirted with you, I should be sick sorry to take it so desperately to heart."

By this time the room seemed to Margaret to be running round with her, but she made a strong effort, and endeavoured to rally, and forced herself to swallow some of the hot coffee.

"But," persisted Mrs Logan, "if he has ever come to the point and made you an offer—although for all his being an *Honourable* it would be a poor match after all—if I were in your place I would not let him slip through my fingers till I had secured him in some way or other, either by making him declare his intentions before competent witnesses, or by making him give his promise on black and white, with his name signed to it, so that if he slighted you you might get some damages off him."

To a mind constituted as was the mind of Miss Inglis, so naturally pure, and of so much delicacy, the scope of Mrs Logan's advice appeared as gross

as it was impracticable ; and it altogether tallied so little with her feelings and notions, that it roused her to some degree of self-possession.

Her agitation subsided, and with all the enthusiasm of a young and confiding heart, she could have spoken out in vindication of the honour and steady principles of her lover.

But ere she had framed a reply, a summons was sent for Mrs Logan to attend her lady in her dressing-room. The message was to tell Mrs Logan, who had the charge of the family linen, to get beds prepared for guests, who were expected immediately. A courier had arrived to announce that the whole tribe of the Weirhams, the old lord excepted, were on their way to Ingliston, because Mr Charles had got unexpected orders to rejoin his ship immediately, and he was to embark at Greenock, whither his family were to accompany him, and they were all to spend a day at Ingliston on their way.

As Mrs Logan wished the help of Miss Inglis in making the necessary preparations for the arrival, she cautiously avoided to tell who was coming, for she knew that if Margaret guessed the reason of the unexpected visit, that it would unfit her for rendering her any assistance. But the secret was not to be long kept from her, for after the two had ransacked the store closets for the linens, &c. required on the occasion, and were retracing their way to their own apartments, the sound of carriage-wheels attracted their attention, and then was heard a well known, dear, familiar voice accosting Sir Norman, who met his guests at the entrance-door. Margaret stopped and eagerly listened. "How sad is my lot," thought she, "that I might not go to welcome

him." And she lingered at the farthest extremity of a long passage or gallery, where, unseen herself, she might have a view of the whole party as they entered the saloon.

Sir Norman led up Lady Weirham, then followed her three daughters and her eldest son the Master of Weirham, and last of all Charles; and he looked round, as if to the spot where Margaret stood, but it was impossible that he could see her, for she was concealed by a projection of the wall. She, however, saw *him* distinctly, and she thought his face looked sorrowful, but she might be mistaken. She had not time to gain another look, for in a moment he had passed out of her sight into the brilliant apartments and the door was shut, and the poor unhappy proscribed being re-ascended the stair to her own retirement, with a breaking and a bursting heart.

CHAPTER XV.

" Behave yoursell before folk,
Behave yoursell before folk,
Whate'er you do, when out o' view,
Be cautious aye before folk."

A. RODGERS.

It was in the beginning of April. The season had been very backward, and the following morning was cold, damp and hazy, every thing around bearing the aspect of winter, except the shrubs and evergreens in the immediate vicinity of the house.

Charles Weirham, after a sleepless night, had been early out, and had visited most of the favourite haunts

of Miss Inglis, in hopes of meeting her, but in vain. He returned, and wandered about close to the house, but he was still disappointed, for she did not make her appearance. With an exhausted and melancholy air, he joined the party at breakfast, for which meal he had no appetite, notwithstanding his morning rambles.

His dejection was observed, but the thoughts of his departure seemed sufficiently to account for it, and no notice was taken ; only the other guests at table, as if out of sympathy for him, looked dull also, and it passed off a heartless and cheerless meal. After it was concluded, Charles again wandered out, seeking an interview with the object of his attachment.

Sir Norman retreated to his study, accompanied by the Master of Weirham.

But the Master of Weirham did not fancy remaining long shut up in this dismal den, with such a dismal companion as Sir Norman ; and Sir Norman was not anxious for his stay, so they parted by mutual consent, and Alexander Weirham, taking possession of a couple of newspapers, repaired to where the ladies were assembled, and took his comfortable station in an arm-chair by the drawing-room fire.

The Weirhams were not to depart till the morrow, and the young ladies, who were noted for their industry, had each brought some pretty piece of fancy-work to pass the time.

Lady Grace Inglis herself, who was an extraordinary workwoman for her years, displayed to them her achievements in the art of needlework. The first thing to which she drew their attention was a series of heads, done in fine worsted upon dark

cloth, executed with all the accuracy and beautiful effect of fine painting. And, next in order, she shewed them, even more to the life, groups of wild fowl and various sorts of game done in the same style. Her son Sir Norman inherited from her his passion for the imitative art, and his pencil seemed to achieve what she could so exquisitely accomplish with the needle. Lady Weirham was not a person of great taste, and having seen those wonderful sewed tableaux before, they wanted the charm of novelty; and, moreover, she was not altogether free from womanish envy at any thing which was beyond the range of ordinary female attainments, so she was not much in a humour for extolling their beauties. Had Sir Norman been shewing off his pictures,—a thing, by-the-by, which he never did in his life, for he was as ashamed of even the most successful efforts of his pencil, as the most timid, modest young author could be supposed to be of the first literary crime which he had perpetrated in letterpress,—had Sir Norman been shewing off his pictures, as was before remarked, it would have been a very different affair. Lady Weirham would then have found plenty of words to express her admiration. But her daughters, to whom the exhibition was new, were in ecstasies of wonder at Lady Grace's performance. The old lady very modestly received their encomiums and well-merited praise, while she proceeded to shew them a variety of other specimens of her handiwork, footstools and screens, purses, bracelets, and work-bags, curiously wrought and done in various kinds of net-work. These aroused Lady Weirham's attention. There was nothing in *them* to excite her jealousy, they being within the sphere of what she herself

or her daughters could accomplish, and she bestowed abundance of commendation upon them.

"Beautiful indeed, Lady Grace! very beautiful!" exclaimed she, as she turned over and inspected the articles displayed on the work-table. "But see, Lydia," continued she to her eldest daughter, while she caught up a pretty reticule half finished. "How curiously is that done! It is something like the one you worked for a present to Mrs D'Eresby. No; I see it is not the same. Well, that has a pretty effect."

"Oh, how pretty, really!" ejaculated Miss Lydia. "No, it is quite different, mama. Mine was not so handsome as that. The net is not the same. Do, pray, Lady Grace, shew me how you do that. Pray, do shew me."

Lady Grace, who was seated near the group who had all their heads together examining the article in question, put on her spectacles, and took it in her hand.

"Ah, that is not my work," said she. "This is what I am doing," and she directed their attention to another bag of a different fabric. "That was begun," continued she, "by a maid of mine, who left me and was married last year. I can do the stitch, but I found it too trying for my eyes, it is so minute. But I have a person in the house, who can shew it you; she does it well, and would have finished it long ago, but she was busy with a pair of footstools which I was anxious to have done, and it has been laid aside."

"I should of all things like to learn," cried Miss Weirham, attempting a stitch or two, but without success. "I must not spoil it though," added she. "But I want to do a little gift for Maria Græme on

her marriage, and that would be beautiful in white flox silk with silver, would it not, mama?"

"Delightful!" said Lady Weirham.

"Elegant!" responded her second daughter Juliana.

"Elegant and sweet!" echoed the youngest daughter Adelaide, looking up from her own work, for all the time, she had been seated apart anxiously engaged with a piece of work, which seemed completely to engross her attention.

"Beautiful!" ejaculated Lady Weirham, whose enthusiasm for the bag was not cooled, although, as she leant back upon the couch, she seemed somewhat exhausted; and, with a languid air, she continued. "But every thing *in* and about Ingliston is beautiful. Really, Lady Grace, you dwell in an Eden of sweets, and you are not contented with having every thing blooming like the Vale of Tempe around you, but you must, in all the style of eastern magnificence, have beautiful handmaids to attend you. I think I have seldom seen two more handsome young women than those who assisted us at our toilets this morning. You know, Lady Grace, I was not, when we were coming in such a body, to be burdening your good house with our own maids."

Lady Weirham made this remark to shew her consideration, it being a well known fact, and one which she knew experimentally, that visitors are more welcome when they bring no attendants, they being a more serious tax upon the hospitality of the entertainer than their superiors. But the truth was, Lady Weirham could burden the good house of Ingliston with her servants, when it suited herself. But on the present occasion, when on a distant journey, and when they would require to be some nights

and days at public hotels, she did not choose to burden herself there with an expense, which might be avoided, of another carriage with attendants. "But I think," continued she, "I never saw prettier young women in my life. Nay, I thought the person who assisted me was remarkably handsome; but when I stepped into my daughters' dressing-room and saw the other girl, it perfectly astonished me."

"Oh! did you think her pretty, mama?" cried Miss Weirham.

"To be sure I did," replied her mother. "Vastly pretty, I thought her."

"Well, I did not think so," replied Miss Lydia, curling up her pug nose, as if she felt an offensive odour. "I did not think so."

"Neither did I," cried Miss Juliana, with serious indignation.

"She is far too dark," asseverated Miss Weirham, warming in the argument.

"By far," reverberated Miss Juliana, tossing back her own sandy locks from off her face, which was of the complexion of ill-fed veal. "And what a frightened creature she seemed," continued Miss Juliana, laughing maliciously. "She was like to cry at every word we spoke to her."

"Nay," interposed Miss Weirham, "the tears actually did come. I detected *that* when she was going out at the room door, and you called her back for something."

"How absurd," ejaculated Miss Juliana. "Absurd, to be sure," reiterated Miss Weirham, "and the sound of her voice, I don't believe we ever heard," added she.

"I don't believe it," responded Miss Juliana.

"But mama to think her pretty amuses me," re-

joined Miss Weirham. "Really, mama, you can't be in earnest? Lady Grace, you must excuse us for discussing the looks of your young waiting-maid"—"You know," interrupted Lady Weirham, who was not to give up her own opinion, "you and Juliana and I never agree about people's looks. Indeed, none of you agree with me except Charles. He and I generally are of one opinion; and I am not sure but that he has the most correct taste of the whole of you."

"What are you disputing about?" inquired the Master of Weirham, looking off from his newspaper, and resuming it again without waiting for a reply.

What say *you*, Adelaide?" asked Miss Weirham, not yet done with the subject. "Oh, I know nothing about it," replied Adelaide, "for I required nobody's services at my toilet. I got the start of you all this morning, and I was in the library before any of you had opened your eyes."

"By-the-by," rejoined Lydia, "Adelaide was up early to get on with her purse, which I don't believe will be finished in time after all."

"That it shall," said Adelaide, "if I should sit up all night at it."

"But pray, Lady Grace," cried Miss Lydia, "when am I to be shewn how to do that netting with the embroidery on it?"

"Instantly, my dear," replied Lady Grace. "May I trouble you, Mr Weirham, to pull the bell?"

The bell was pulled, and the servant who answered was ordered to tell Miss Margaret to attend in the drawing-room.

Lady Grace, from the conversation which had just taken place, was quite satisfied that Lady Weir-

ham did not suspect that any relationship existed between her and the person whose looks they had been criticising. But the fact was, that Lady Weirham had a shrewd guess. She had heard by report that a connection of that description resided in the family, and she was pretty sure that Margaret was the person. But Lady Weirham could appear so perfectly guiltless of knowing more than it was wished she should know, that she could have blinded most effectually a much more penetrating observer than Lady Grace Inglis.

Margaret Inglis, with a pale countenance and a palpitating heart, entered the room. A timid glance around convinced her that the object of her love was not present. By this she regained more courage, and she advanced to where the ladies were seated.

The eyes of the whole party were directed towards her, except those of her grandmother, who, with her spectacles on, was examining the reticule on which the lesson was to be given.

Alexander Weirham, who was an empty heartless being, full of his own importance, possessing a tall figure and a handsome face, with nothing in it, deigned a glance of dignified curiosity over his left shoulder towards the individual who had just entered the room, and resumed again his newspaper.

"Come hither, Margaret," said Lady Grace, "and shew these ladies how to work this. My own eyes are so weak at present, that I cannot attempt it."

And she handed the article in question to her grand-daughter, and took off her spectacles, and passed her hand across her eyes as if her sight had been strained by the exertion.

"Now you both cannot learn at once," said Lady

Weirham to her two eldest daughters, who sat close looking on, while Margaret stood by attempting to shew them the way ; " you must learn one at a time ; your heads are so close together ; the young woman can't see, I am certain."

" Well, teach Juliana first," said Miss Weirham, sitting back, and giving up the contest.

" Oh, it is not very difficult ; see, I have got it now, Lydia," cried Juliana. " There it is," and Lydia's head was in an instant again close to her sister's.

" No, you are wrong, Juliana," said Lydia, " quite wrong. You are spoiling the work. That is not at all the same. Let *her* (meaning Margaret) do a few stitches more, and then try."

Margaret was proceeding, as she was directed, to do some stitches slowly, the two young ladies with eager eyes looking on, and Lady Weirham at a little distance looking on also, when the drawing-room door opened and Charles entered.

" Do you want to see the papers, Charles ?" said Alexander Weirham, throwing down the paper he was done with on a table close by him, and taking up the other.

" Not just now," said Charles, while he came forward to the group at work, surprised at finding Margaret Inglis, the person whom he had in vain sought and watched for all that morning, in this position with his own sisters. And she was much altered in her looks since he saw her last ; she was thin, and pale, and melancholy.

What a painful and unhappy moment was this to him, to see the object of his heart, whom he yearned

to clasp to his bosom, and that he dared not recognise her or even offer her a chair, as she seemed, on his approaching and taking his station at her side, as if she would have sunk to the ground.

"Charles, you are in the young woman's light," said Lady Weirham, when she saw Margaret's hands tremble, as she attempted to rectify some false stitches she had made. Charles made no reply to his mother's remark, but moved round to the other side of Margaret, who in vain tried to remedy what she had done amiss, and her face glowed, and her ears tingled, and every thing seemed swimming round.

"Let me try," said Juliana, who saw her agitation. "I am famous at putting those things to rights," and she took the work out of Margaret's hand. "There it is," said Juliana, "it was not so far wrong as you thought. Now, I am sure I can do it at last," added she, proceeding to do a little to the bag, and then handing it to her sister. "Try, Lydia, what you can make of it." Lydia tried in her turn. "Oh, I think I know it famously now," said she. "Won't you come, Adelaide, and learn?"

"Not I, indeed," said Adelaide. "You must teach me afterwards."

"Do you think Adelaide would, on any account, stop her own work just now?" rejoined Juliana. "What do you think, Charles? She has been up since five o'clock at your purse."

"And I fear it won't be finished after all," interposed Miss Weirham, who liked the dark view of every thing.

"But, must we positively go to-morrow?" said Adelaide.

"Positively, my dear," said Lady Weirham.

"And must you positively be in Glasgow to-morrow night?" inquired Juliana.

"I must," faltered Charles; while, to hide his emotion, he bent his head nearer to the work which his sister held in her hand.

"How provoking to be so hurried at the last," said Miss Weirham, addressing herself to Lady Grace. "We were to have had a grand fête at Weirham Castle, and had, besides, a number of other parties in contemplation, but this hurried order has defeated every thing."

"'Tis sad, indeed," replied Lady Grace. "But you must just look forward to another happy surprise of your brother returning soon and unexpectedly as he did at this time."

"Alas! that cannot be for five years at the least, whatever more," said Lady Weirham sighing. "They are ordered out to such a very distant station."

An unnatural, hysterical shriek burst from Margaret's bosom, where her feelings had been too long pent up, and alarmed the whole party, and she would have fallen on the floor had Charles not caught her in his arms.

"What is the matter?" cried Lady Grace; and they all started up.

"How unfortunate!" said Lady Weirham, coming forward to render assistance. "She looked ill when she came in, and you have kept her very inconsiderately, very cruelly, standing on her feet all this time."

"Is she subject to fits?" inquired Miss Weirham, looking curiously in the deathlike countenance of Margaret.

"She never had one in her life to my knowledge," said Lady Grace, pulling off her frill and neckerchief, and undoing her waistband.

"I beseech you, do not crowd upon her; let her have air," cried Charles, almost overcome, and gasping for breath himself. "For heaven's sake, open a window," and Adelaide flew and threw open the opposite casement, while he laid her on the nearest couch, and supported her still in his arms, while her head rested on his shoulder.

"Ring the bell, Mr Weirham," cried Lady Grace, in a state of real fear and agitation, and unable to suggest a remedy.

Mr Weirham had started from his chair at the first alarm. He did not, however, move one straw-breadth out of his way to offer any assistance, but stood stock-still on the hearthrug, toasting his back at the fire, and holding the newspaper in his hand.

"Send Mrs Logan here instantly, and fly off for the doctor," cried Lady Grace, when the servant appeared to answer the bell.

"She is gone! I really believe she is gone," exclaimed Juliana.

"For God's sake, Charles, do not clasp her so close," cried Lady Weirham, holding her smelling-bottle to her nostrils. "She would be better laid at length upon the couch." And she extricated her from her son's almost desperate grasp, and lowered her head, while Charles dropped down upon his knees, and bent over her in a state of feelings not to be described.

"Oh, Mr Weirham, will you call up Sir Norman?" cried Lady Grace, who now stood aloof in perfect consternation and terror.

Sir Norman, Mrs Logan, and five or six men and women servants following in the train, came hurrying in.

"Good God! how did this happen?" exclaimed Sir Norman in utter dismay, holding up his hands, as he beheld the apparently lifeless form of his daughter stretched out as in death; and he dropped down on his knees opposite to where knelt young Weirham with his arm still beneath her head, and her hand clenched in his, and Sir Norman laid his face close to hers, and the tears of his paternal love did for once bedew her pallid cheeks, while he kissed her lips, and said softly, "Margaret, dear Margaret!"

She heaved a long drawn, deep, heavy sigh. "Thank God, she still lives!" cried Sir Norman, springing up and raising her gently, while Charles rose also, and assisted in supporting her at the other side. Lady Grace meantime had sunk down in an elbow-chair, and was actually becoming faint herself.

"Don't be alarmed, my lady. Miss Margaret will soon be better," said Mrs Logan, taking Margaret's other hand in hers, while she struggled with returning respiration, and every breath she heaved seemed like the last gasp of life.

"She is like ice," said Mrs Logan, rubbing her hand in both of hers. "Do get some wine and water hot, with sugar, as fast as possible."

"Wine and hot water, wine and hot water, do you hear?" shouted Sir Norman.

"Wine and hot water!" called out Lady Grace faintly; and, with all expedition, the wine and water were brought.

"Can I be useful?" said the Master of Weirham,

coming forth from the hearthrug and putting down the newspapers, while Sir Norman drove him aside as he pushed past him to mix the beverage himself.

But, in Sir Norman's zeal to be active, he struck the decanter on the marble slab, and down flowed the contents upon the floor. "That will never do," said he, agitated and ashamed at this *gaucherie* of his; and, seizing another decanter, he unsteadily poured out, spilling as he poured, an unmeasured quantity of wine into a large rummer, and filled it up to the brim, and over the brim, with boiling water.

Meantime, Margaret opened her eyes, and looked wildly up to the ceiling. "What is this? what is this? Where am I?" said she, in a bewildered tone.

"You are with your own dear friends," said Charles softly, while he held her closer to his heart, and gave the hand which was in his a gentle pressure. She uttered a loud hysterical sob.

"Take this, my dear," said Sir Norman, bending over her with his formidable bumper. "Hold her up, Charles, hold her up," added he, while, with a shaking hand, he made some unskilful attempts to administer the cordial.

"For any sake, have mercy, Sir Norman, upon the damask," cried Lady Weirham, assisting her son to support the invalid, and seeing the scalding liquor running over Sir Norman's fingers and flowing down remorselessly upon the costly furniture.

"Allow me, sir," said Mrs Logan, mercifully relieving him from the goblet and administering it in a more adroit manner. "Take a little, my dear Miss, and it will make you well," said she, in a coaxing tone. The well-known voice of Mrs Logan,

more than any other thing, seemed to recall her to her recollection, and she sipped a small quantity of the unpalatable mixture, for Sir Norman, in his haste, had added no sugar. But, as it was a medicine, not a pleasure draught, this omission was of no consequence. Its efficacy was the same in helping to restore her, and the shivering which, like an ague-fit, had seized her, began to subside.

"You feel better now, I hope?" said Lady Weirham, relinquishing her place at her side, and sitting down, fatigued with her exertions.

"Yes, I am quite well now," replied Margaret, trying to rally, while a crimson flush suffused her countenance, when she was conscious of her own position, so near her lover, and surrounded by such a group.

"What a blessed thing you have come to yourself," said Lady Grace, recovered from her fear, and advancing towards her in her own stately way. "You have alarmed us all," continued she in a tone very like that of reproof. "This has been a singular attack. How was you seized? How did you feel before it came on? Why did you not tell that you was ill?" and fifty other queries which it would have baffled a much bolder person, in a far less trying situation than that of her grand-daughter, to answer.

"She would be much better to retire quietly to my parlour," said Mrs Logan, who had some sense of the painfulness of her ladyship's perplexing questions to the sensitive young creature. "Much better, I think," said Sir Norman, to whom Mrs Logan seemed on the present occasion like an oracle.

"Just lean on me, Miss," said Mrs Logan, putting

her arm round her, while Sir Norman rendered his assistance on the other side.

"Allow me, if you please, sir," said Charles, proffering his aid in a much less confident way than he naturally would have done under other circumstances; and it seemed as if it were merely to oblige Sir Norman by relieving him from the duty that he offered his services. "Allow me, if you please, sir," and Sir Norman willingly relinquished her to the hands of him and Mrs Logan, who led her out of the drawing-room, while he himself followed in the rear to see her safely consigned to a place of repose.

"You have been a capital nurse, Charles," remarked Lady Weirham, as they left the room.

"Humane young man!" ejaculated Lady Grace emphatically.

"Capital nurse, indeed," said Adelaide; "ten to one but he falls in love with her after this."

"Hush! Adelaide. How could you utter such egregious nonsense?" said the mother, who did not seem to relish the jest.

"I declare it must already be two o'clock," exclaimed Miss Weirham, whom the sound of a carriage attracted to the window. "There is the coach, mama; did not you order it at two?" inquired she, as she saw their own superb equipage and four draw up to the front entrance.

"At a quarter past two," replied Lady Weirham, looking at her watch, which lay on the table before her; "and it is exactly that. Be quick, my dears, for it is a pretty long drive to Eaglesford."

"But you must have luncheon before you go," said Lady Grace.

"No," said Lady Weirham, rising, "we must not

now wait for that. We shall probably lunch with our friends at Eaglesford. They keep much later hours than you do, and I think we shall be in time."

"A late lunch is sure to spoil an early dinner," interposed the Master of Weirham, who liked Lady Grace's suggestion much better than his mother's arrangement.

"Mr Weirham is in the right," said Lady Grace, "you *must* take some refreshments before you go, and I hope your drive will give you an appetite for *our early* dinner on your return, at five o'clock." So without farther parley, Lady Grace ordered some refreshments, while the Weirham ladies in the mean time put on their carriage dresses to be in readiness for the proposed call, which was intended as Charles's farewell visit to their friends and relatives—the family of Eaglesford.

Could Charles Weirham have excused himself from this visit under any reasonable pretext, he would have done it. But the thing was impossible, for it was entirely on his account that it was to be made, and he had agreed to it, although reluctantly, and now it was absolute misery to think of fulfilling it. He had seen the object of his affections consigned to her quiet retreat, Mrs Logan's sitting-room—the beloved object who alone was for him the sole attraction at Ingliston; and his passion glowed, if possible, with more intensity from the recent scene which had taken place. And although he could not remain with propriety in her actual presence, it was something at least to be under the same roof, and to linger near her as long as might be permitted, ere fate decreed a long, inevitable, perhaps final, separation.

Mrs Logan, whether accidentally, or with a design to afford an opportunity to the lovers, it is impossible to say, after giving Sir Norman a dissertation on the proper mode of treating patients in a swoon, to which he listened with apparent edification, directed his attention to the peculiar aspect from her windows, which, from their height, commanded an extensive range of the surrounding country, which particularly interested the Baronet, who probably had not viewed his grounds from that point of observation for many years.

When the attention of the two was thus occupied on distant objects, Charles found means to impart to Margaret a few words of encouragement and hope, and to utter a solemn, though whispered, oath of changeless affection, and to impress upon her lips a silent sign and seal of his love.

After such a moment as this, to be whirled away amid the noisy bustle of his own gay family, on the chilling errand of a heartless visit of ceremony, was intolerably painful. Though circumstances forbade his being in the company of Margaret, if he might at least have been permitted to be *alone*, to have the melancholy luxury of thinking of her without interruption or distraction, it would have been a gratification. But this was denied him; and it is not to be wondered at, and he is scarcely to be condemned, if he wished from his heart that all the people at Eaglesford and elsewhere were at the bottom of the Red Sea, not excepting his own mother, brother, and sisters, who were the more immediate objects of annoyance to him, by their incessant and unlucky allusions to the past transactions of the day.

The drive and the leave-taking of the Eaglesford

family, theride back to Ingliston, and the dinner there, and the other usual routine of the evening till bedtime, disagreeable, inexpressibly disagreeable as each and all of these in painful succession were to Charles Weirham, came to an end, and he retired to his chamber the most miserable of beings, not to be a guilty one, that can be imagined. Sleep, or rest, or composure of any kind, was impossible. Nothing but thoughts of hopeless misery haunted and overwhelmed him as he contemplated his departure on the morrow. And so passed the first watches of the night. But to those feelings of utter despair succeeded high hopes and fantastical presentiments of happiness, and of deliverance from all his troubles. It is often after the deepest depression that the imagination rises above all trials and difficulties, and accomplishes great achievements through impracticable means. There are easy-minded persons in the world, for whom life has no trials, or whose trials never rob them of their rest; I know nothing of these, nor of their feelings, however enviable their lot. Nor can these know any thing of the perambulations of fancy in those reveries which the hours of solitude induce, when, in spite of the stern realities of life, all that perplexes and annoys vanishes away like the morning mist. But those who indulge in such dreams of hope return to their avocations in the world, and discover by experience that they are the self-same helpless, sorrowing beings that they were before, still bearing about with them all their weight of anxieties, without the power to lighten themselves of the burden.

An ardent youth like Charles Weirham was not without a large share of imagination. It was not

in his nature to endure a long miserable night of despair, and he began to indulge in some romantic speculations, which, after all, were but a poor substitute for sober peace of mind and solid happiness. After forming many schemes, and weighing them all, he came to noble resolutions, and was determined to act the hero, and gain a complete victory over his own weakness, and the tyranny, opposition, and injustice of the world. And in his wildest excursions of imagination he was not asleep, nay, his eyes were wide open as in the day. He was fully aware of where he was, and what he was, and of all the realities of his situation. He saw the darkness lazily retiring, and the light of dawn dimly and slowly waxing brighter, enabling him to identify all the surrounding objects, the furniture of his bed, and the walls of his apartment, and he caught a glimpse through his window of that clear, blue, unchangeable vault of the heavens above, which forms a universal chamber of magnificence alike to all, and under which mighty roof the family of the world may, each from his little dormitory, arouse himself and exult, if he will, without an imputation of empty pride or of vanity, in the glorious grandeur of its furnishings.

The first plan which suggested itself to Charles, as the shortest, directest, boldest step to immediate happiness was to rise betimes, watch for, or search out from her retirement, the mistress of his heart, give his mother, brother, sisters, and all the good people of Ingliston the slip, and set off—On foot? Or how? He did not condescend to particulars in this hurried sketch of his future proceedings. But he was to set out—*that* he decided on—and call on

a minister, for he was quite honourable in his views, and cause the reverend gentleman, right or wrong, to tie the indissoluble knot, and then he would retire to some sequestered spot among running brooks, green trees, and blackbirds, and pass a long long—for they were both young, and might reasonably expect this—and pass a long life of unmingled felicity, and laugh at the world's fantastic distinctions. But how were they to subsist? She had no money, neither had he, excepting the scanty allowance his father gave him from time to time, and, undoubtedly, that would then be withdrawn. How could they subsist? was a plain, simple question which suggested itself; but, plain and simple as it was, it could not be answered; so he dismissed this first scheme as impracticable, but not till he had, in imagination, wandered through many a delicious scene in the beautiful retreat which his fancy conjured up.

As he could not linger on such an unattainable prospect, he must devise something else. He would go to sea as he intended, but he would not wait to rise in the usual progressive way, he would take a short cut to preferment. He would acquit himself like a hero; perhaps capture the enemy's fleet, and be promoted to the command of his own. He would achieve mighty things for his country, and his country, overwhelmed with gratitude, would perform mighty things for him; and these rewards of merit, the most honourable of all distinctions, would be acquired independent of hereditary rank or family interest, and then he would be at the summit of his felicity. But, unfortunately, at that moment, Britain had made peace with her neighbours, and, unless he could break the truce, there was no field for

his exertions. As gaining promotion in this way might, therefore, be a tedious process, he turned his thoughts to something else. He would abandon the navy altogether, and enter upon a new profession. He had talents for the bar, or the pulpit; but after sketching to himself a *programme* in each of these lines, till he had reached to the Attorney-generalship of the kingdom in the one, and to the See of Durham in the other, the years of dry study, the years of barren toil, and the still longer years of dry, barren, absolutely famishing, expectation fell upon him, like the weight of a wet blanket, and damped his pinions, and he could fly no more. When a man can arrive at nothing by virtuous exertions, he must turn desperate; he has no choice left; fate drives him on, and stamps him a villain.

Charles Weirham was in this predicament, as every scheme seemed to fail; he would be driven to act the libertine in spite of himself. If he could but possess the object of his reckless passion, it would be all the world to him. Every other object of ambition was unworthy of pursuit. He would then be as happy, if he were but a man before the mast, as to be elected high admiral of the seas, and the office of attorney-general, nay, all the high offices in the state, might become extinct, and all the then dignitaries of the church might remain incumbent till the day of judgment for what he cared.

But would Margaret Inglis herself offer no objections to his plan for her own degradation? Would she consent to follow him in his fortunes? to be smuggled, perhaps, on board by him, in male disguise? Avaunt such a dishonouring and debasing thought, unfit for one moment to be harboured.

His better feelings rose up in battle array against these temptations, and he came to the resolution at last of concealing no longer his attachment, but magnanimously to avow it ere he departed.

Sir Norman Inglis, who had a right to dispose of the fortunes of his daughter, was the person to whom he determined to reveal his secret ; and he it was who had the power of promoting his interests and forwarding his views. He it was who could remove all difficulties ; he could give a competence, nay, wealth, to his daughter, and she possessed in herself all other requisites for a high station.

Sir Norman would not surely be very angry at him for forming an attachment to his own child, nay, it was probable he would rejoice to see her brought forward in society, as her virtues and beauty merited.

But how was he to face his own family with such a disclosure, though every bar were removed but the bar-sinister, which would be to them an everlasting stumblingblock ? This was the point which staggered his courage : but this fear of his family was the weak point in his own character, over which he resolved to gain complete victory. And his family, averse as they might be, had at least human hearts, which, though hard, might soften in the course of time. His absence would tend to melt them into sympathy and reconciliation. Sir Norman's sanction and countenance would go a far way towards effecting the same, provided the mother and hopeful daughters did not die in the interim of broken hearts at losing Sir Norman himself, as a matrimonial ally, for, although it might not be against the

Mosaic code to have this double connection with the Inglises, it certainly would sound very strangely in the ears of the world, and look very odd in the eyes of the world,—and the world's eyes and ears are a much more formidable affair to most people than the divine law,—it certainly would look very odd, absurd, and ridiculous, nay, the parties themselves would feel it so, and none more than the young man himself, to have his sister Lydia, Juliana, or Adelaide elevated to the venerable rank of what courtesy might constrain him to regard her as—*his mother-in-law*.

As the young lover's imagination flattered him into the belief that circumstances would, by degrees, reconcile his relations to the step he meant to take, he did not leave out of the account the virtues and graces of Margaret's character. Those, he thought, above all, would completely subdue the opposition of his friends, and make them ashamed of having set their faces against a being who, he fancied, would appear to them as beautiful and angelically perfect, as she appeared to himself.

With such a theory as this in his head, he rose from his sleepless couch at an early hour, and quitted his room in hopes of an opportunity of communicating his resolutions to Miss Inglis.

But all the house was afoot, and nothing but hurry for the departure of the visitors. The mother and sisters were in their travelling dresses. The breakfast was already preparing, and Lady Grace ready to preside.

"Now or never was the time," thought Charles, as he grasped the hand of Sir Norman, whom he

met in the lobby at the threshold of the breakfast-room. "Now is the time," and he was preparing to request a private interview with him. But he was unable to articulate, and he wrung Sir Norman's hand, and Sir Norman wrung *his* in return, and seemed moved at seeing the agitation in the countenance of his young friend. "My dear fellow, keep up your heart," said Sir Norman; and another squeezing of hands took place, and he pushed Charles into the room before him, and set him on a chair close by himself at table. No alternative was now left to Charles, but to wait till after breakfast. The company was assembled, the business of eating commenced. Lady Weirham was sorrowful and sentimental; Lady Grace responded to her remarks with moral observations and reflections. The Miss Weirhams disputed keenly with their elder brother about the colour of a lady's hair they had seen at Eaglesford. Sir Norman looked all the time as if he were going to cry, and Charles swallowed down his hot tea to hide his confusion, though every mouthful he took threatened him with suffocation.

The breakfast things were withdrawn, and the party dispersed. Sir Norman and the Master of Weirham repaired to the library; Charles followed. Mr Weirham was called out by his mother to make some arrangements about their travelling. Now was the golden opportunity. Charles must seize it. He considered and contrived what he was to say, and at length faltered out a short sentence or two without any definite meaning whatever. Sir Norman begged him not to say a word about it; for he thought the youth, in the fulness of warm gratitude, was about

to express, in some overwhelming compliment, his esteem for him, or to thank him for his kindness.

"Don't mention it, my dear Charles," and Sir Norman shook him by the hand, and clapped him on the shoulder, and drew his handkerchief across his own eyes, while he dexterously feigned to be only applying it to his nose, and then paced up and down the book-room, and hammered at the coals in the grate every time he passed it. Fully twenty minutes wore away. Charles was still meditating, hesitating, and determining, when a hallooing and shouting from his brother on the stair aroused him to recollection. Every thing was ready for their journey. He grasped Sir Norman's hand; Sir Norman grasped both of his, and kissed his cheek; then, putting his arm through that of Charles, hugged him along with him down stairs.

The whole travelling group, with a host of attendants, were in the entrance-hall. The Weirham coach was at the door. Lady Grace kissed Charles, and expressed her wishes for his safety and prosperity. Charles shook hands right and left with every body that stood in his way, his own mother, sisters and all; and his sisters alleged afterwards that he actually hugged Sir Norman's butler, an imputation he was wholly unable to disprove, for his recollection failed him. He was dragged by his brother, and pushed by Sir Norman, into the coach. The steps were folded up, the door was shut, and off they whirled out of sight in an instant.

CHAPTER XVI.

"What equal torment to the grief of minde,
And pyning anguish hid in gentle heart?"

SPENSER.

After the events just recorded, Miss Margaret Inglis, the victim of that passion which, of all others, when too intense, becomes the most destructive in its effects, suffered a lingering and severe illness. A low, nervous, intermittent fever succeeded, which kept her an invalid for several months.

Mrs Logan, who was Margaret's chief attendant at her sick bed, tired of her post. She could have carried on with unwearied zeal an intrigue, where either pleasure or advantage might have accrued from it to herself. But to be day after day called upon to watch the progress of a tedious illness, and that too in a quarter from which no profit was likely to arise, was more than her patience or philanthropy was equal to. She became peevish, irritable, and unkind to the gentle creature who was reluctantly doomed to be her companion, and a dependent upon her good offices.

Every thing tended to increase Mrs Logan's discontent. It was a rainy, ungenial season. Few visitors came. There was absolutely no variety for Mrs Logan, and she was unable to exist without it. She threw up her place in a fit of chagrin. Lady Grace and she had a dispute: Lady Grace was offended; Mrs Logan was insolent. Lady Grace could only resent and punish the affront by withholding a character. Mrs Logan informed her lady-

ship that her character was long established before she had had the misfortune to come into *her* service, and that she wanted none from her ; and so they parted. In the course of the following winter a rumour reached Ingliston that she had gone to be housekeeper to Colonel Gilbert. But this was only a subject for discussion and animadversion in the servants' hall.

It was with much satisfaction that Margaret Inglis contemplated Mrs Logan's departure. Although she could not but feel herself under obligations to her for many acts of real kindness for which it was not in Margaret's nature ever to be ungrateful, yet she always felt something almost contaminating in her society, and besides this, she never thought herself secure from being betrayed by her. She knew she was completely in her power, for she had made herself mistress of her secrets, and all her weakness was known to her from her want of ability to dissemble or to conceal her feelings.

Whatever sort of person the successor to Mrs Logan might be, Margaret determined to begin her intercourse with her on different grounds. Sometimes a sick-bed strengthens the resolutions, and it was so with her. She felt never more resolved, nor less afraid, than now, to request an apartment to herself, where she would be entirely apart from associating with Lady Grace's woman, and she was successful in obtaining the request, Lady Grace condescending to grant it with some reservations, retaining to herself a discretionary power, which her grand-daughter did not dispute, of withdrawing the favour from her when she (her ladyship) saw meet and proper.

The summer passed away without Margaret's ever enjoying almost the fresh air ; and when autumn came, she might be seen a pale shadow of loveliness flitting about the grounds when the meridian sun was shining—the only time permitted her by her medical attendant to be abroad. In one of these solitary rambles she had the misfortune to meet her sincere friend and admirer, Mr Gowans, for misfortune it really was, it being nothing but a cause of pain to both parties. His uncle, Mr Stirling, was dead. He had succeeded to his business, and to all his personal property ; and, upon the whole, he was now a person of substance, and of some consideration.

He had often been at Ingliston during the summer. It was with great concern he heard of the illness of Miss Inglis, and it was a matter of no small regret to him to have been so long deprived of the pleasure of seeing her.

On the present occasion, when he caught a glimpse of her through the trees coming towards him, his face brightened up with delight. But how transient was that emotion of pleasure, and how soon his countenance fell, when *she* manifested no joy at the interview. She shook hands with him, and asked for his health, and then would have passed away on her lonely walk. But he had much interesting matter at heart which he wanted to converse about. He offered her his arm, which she had formerly been often in the habit of accepting, and requested permission to accompany her in her walk. She could not be so silly and so pettish as to refuse this request ; nay, she could not but have a sincere regard and friendship for Mr Gowans. He had always been a true friend to her, and she was conscious that

he was the first person that had shewn her that deference and respect which made her feel herself not altogether a being of degradation and contempt.

She was indeed indebted to him for this, and it would have been a poor return for all his attention and kindness if she had been ungracious. She used to be all affability to him when she dreamt of no attachment on his part, and knew nothing of the tender passion herself. But it was different now. She began to suspect that he admired and loved her. Weirham's extravagant flatteries had taught her many things she never thought of before. In short, if they had not generated personal vanity—a failing not natural to her—they had at least taught her an estimation of her own attractions, the power of which she had been previously altogether unconscious of.

She received on this occasion, with shyness and reserve, the calm expressions of regard which Mr Gowans uttered. They seemed tame in comparison of those raptures to which she had been accustomed to listen, and she was evidently more hurt than gratified by his preference. She was in a dilemma which greatly perplexed her; she abruptly shortened her walk, complaining of fatigue, and returned to the house, leaving Mr Gowans surprised and mortified at her strange manner.

This, however, made him the more anxious to come to an explanation, and to declare himself more explicitly, which, when he did, it was only to be decidedly assured that his attentions were disagreeable. But Margaret did not disclose to him that she had yielded her affections to another, and Mr Gowans, although cast down, was not without a hope that he might at last be successful.

In the mean time, Margaret's secret attachment was, as might be imagined, far from being a source of happiness to herself, but quite the reverse. Debarred from all intercourse with the object of it, it was a miserable thing never to hear either directly or indirectly of his welfare ; and although she did not doubt his faithfulness, yet the mind being apt to despond and grow restless under circumstances such as hers, she had a constant, tormenting anxiety to receive from him some assurance that he still loved her. And this feeling increased the more, as all intercourse, for a time, was at an end between the families of Ingliston and Weirham.

Lord Weirham, as has already been noticed, was a speculative, stubborn fool, and his family and fortune had suffered immensely from his zeal in prosecuting impracticable plans of public usefulness. But nothing could subdue his incorrigible vanity ; neither the embarrassment of his circumstances, nor the world's obstinacy in not receiving what he put forth, nor the legislature's slowness to comprehend his suggestions, and contumacy in not acting up to his suggestions, when they did comprehend them, nor the more palpable fact of his printer's premises being choked up with the mouldering and rotting carcasses of his still-born issue, could quench his great desire to be fruitful ; and on he went multiplying and replenishing.

At last his affairs got into so distressing a situation, that he was obliged with his family to retire to the Continent. Weirham Castle was let to a tenant. But the change to the old man affected his health and spirits ; he did not long survive it, and he died leaving a boon to his country of as many manuscripts

and proof-sheets as would singe all the fowls, wild and domestic, of the united empire of Great Britain for half a century.

A wealthy marriage for the young lord was the only thing likely to retrieve the fortunes of the family; and the whole family, aided and abetted by their law-agents and friendly advisers, put all their wits together to accomplish this scheme.

During these events, changes were also taking place in the family of Ingliston. *It* was visited by death. Lady Grace caught a cold, how or where nobody could tell; but inflammation supervened, and it terminated fatally. This event caused a greater change in the house than any one could have anticipated. The old lady had her own merit, in having rendered, in her own peculiar way, the whole establishment comfortable. Sir Norman especially, whom she made it her study to please, was very happy latterly, when both mother and son had come to a right understanding of each other's temper.

Her death was a terrible blow to *him*. It made a breach in his comforts, which he thought never could be filled up. He knew of no one to supply her place. He was a person whom a very trifling annoyance would have robbed of happiness, and this great domestic trial made him perfectly miserable.

His sisters had come uninvited on the occasion of the death, but he refused to see them. These ladies, however, did not care, except for the affront put upon them before strangers.

They had come, not to see Sir Norman, or condole with him, but to claim their mother's wardrobe; and of this they possessed themselves without dispute.

Sir Norman seemed to regard as sacred every institution of his mother. Whatever domestic arrangement she had made, he religiously enforced the observance of, now that she was gone, although many of her arrangements were what he did not approve of in her lifetime, and would have found fault with if he durst.

Fain would he have been on more sociable terms with his daughter, whom he could not but regard with affection. But when his heart would have dictated some exhibition of kindness and intimacy, he recollected his mother's strictness on that point; he thought he heard her lecture him for such want of decorum, and he forbore, although he was not able to render a reason why she had been kept so excluded; and often when she was sitting sad enough in the melancholy solitude of her own remote chamber, mourning, that she had none to care for her, his heart, she knew not, was yearning to have her beside him when he sat down to his lonely meal, surrounded by solitary magnificence,—magnificence, which one smile, one gentle word of social intercourse, one ray of happiness, beaming out from the human countenance, he felt, with miserable conviction, would have outweighed in value a thousand-fold.

Poor Sir Norman was in reality unhappy; and what added to his troubles was a severe affection in his eyes, almost threatening blindness, brought on, it was thought, by too close application to his favourite amusement—painting; and although his sight was renovated, his medical attendant obliged him to give up this employment altogether, which was a terrible privation. There was little left to amuse

him. He was no great visitor, indeed there were few places he cared about going to, excepting the manse, and his friend, Dr Irving, had been removed to a charge in Glasgow, and a man had come in his place, by the appointment of old Lord Weirham, who was the patron, but not a member of the church himself, for, being an Episcopalian, he attended an English chapel in the neighbourhood. This man, put in by Lord Weirham's patronage, Sir Norman absolutely hated for two good reasons ; first, he was resolved to hate the person who succeeded Dr Irving, whatever his qualifications might be ; and, secondly, Lord Weirham had disoblged him grievously, by slighting and altogether overlooking an earnest application from him on behalf of the son of Mrs Hume of Newhall, whom, from latent feelings of gratitude, he anxiously wished to forward in the ministry, and for whom he had made every effort to obtain the nomination to the vacant living. Thus disappointed on all hands, how could he like the man ? At least, Sir Norman's christianity did not rise so high as to enable him to like every body ; but his exceptions were not numerous, for I believe that he had an orthodox attachment to the whole human race, barring this successor to Dr Irving, Miss Diana Hamilton, and his own sisters.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Oh, may we all for death prepare.
What has he left ? and who's his heir ? ”

A year or two passed away in the same unsatisfactory state of affairs as has been described in the last chapter. Things never improved, but grew worse ; and Sir Norman, a prey to discomfort and dissatisfaction, drooped and died, and his death was rather sudden at the last. A few days of feverishness and want of appetite, which caused no uneasiness to his household, was followed by symptoms of a more alarming kind, viz. lethargy and unconsciousness ; and a few days more terminated a life which might have been an eminently useful, as well as an enviably happy one, if his domestic relationships had been better ordered, and his best feelings had not been controlled and checked by unnatural restraints.

As love is, in many respects, an imaginary passion,—that is to say, many of the joys and miseries which its victims experience, are purely ideal, nothing tends so much to correct its extravagancies, and restrain it within the bounds of reason, as the serious trials of life,—what may be called the real substantial evils which occur in the ordinary course of events. This was the case with Sir Norman's orphan daughter. When her attachment to Charles Weirham was in all its freshness and vigour, occupying her mind day and night, with an intensity destructive to her peace, and driving her at times almost to a state of despair, the death of Lady Grace came like the shock which suddenly restores an in-

toxicated person to his senses, and seemed to recall her to reason. It was the first death she had witnessed. That of itself had a striking effect ; and to her young mind, it was overwhelming to think that her friend and protectress was gone from her for ever,—the being on whom she entirely depended, and who had always liberally supplied her with every thing necessary for her comfort, and whom she regarded with the greatest deference and affection,—the being, in fine, who was as her parent and her guardian ; and, besides, from the diminished comfort which she saw in every thing around, she became more sensible by daily increasing experience of the loss she had sustained. Then the death of Sir Norman himself, an event which was to determine her fate.

These were the trials she was called upon to experience ; and, although she never for a moment ceased to regard her lover with an affection, which time, and silence, and absence could not subdue, the passion which had almost deranged her understanding, as well as broken her heart, subsided into a reasonable calm, when she was called upon to take a chief part in those great domestic afflictions which so closely affected her interest.

On the occasion of the death of Sir Norman Inglis, his sisters came not. They had nothing to expect. They had already been paid off. They had no inclination to come to give directions, for they would make no interference in what concerned them not. Every thing was conducted by strangers, to-wit, men of business. Sir Norman's cousin, and heir to his title and estates, should have been present ; but when the accounts of the death arrived, he was in London labouring under severe indisposi-

tion, and his friend and agent, Mr Bland, from Edinburgh, was directed to attend in his room. Mr Gowans also, the Ingliston factor, perhaps the only real friend of the family, though an humble one, was, of course, present, and Sir Norman's remains were buried in a way conformable to his rank and fortune.

But after this last duty was performed, there was an interesting investigation to make. His private papers were to be examined, and a party selected from the company returned after the funeral to open the sealed repositories. It was interesting to both parties; first, to the agent of the new proprietor to see how far the estate was to be burdened, and interesting to Mr Gowans, on account of Margaret Inglis, who felt that on the disclosure then to be made her future hopes depended.

The individuals who met to open the will were these two law-agents and their clerks, also Mr Graeme of Eaglesford, who was a distant relation, another neighbouring proprietor, and the clergyman of the parish, to-wit, Dr Irving's successor, a man of unbounded, low, intermeddling curiosity, who worked his way into every body's affairs. He was present by his own officious impudence, although he had no concern whatever with the business in hand. But the consequence it would give him in the eyes of his parishioners of a lower grade, to retail to them, according to custom, what he saw and heard on the occasion, was a temptation not to be resisted.

After a cursory examination of papers of no importance, Mr Gowans lighted upon one which attracted general attention. It was a testamentary paper of some length, which Mr Gowans proceeded to read to the company.

After disposing of sundry legacies, chiefly small articles of personal property, such as books, watch, pictures, &c. to distant relations and friends, and some trifling legacies in money to his servants, there was bequeathed an annuity of L.200 to his daughter, Margaret Inglis, together with the house and lands of Eastmosshall, to her and her heirs, property he had purchased, and which was the only unentailed portion of his estates, and upon which property the will bore, she might either reside or let it, as might suit her best. Furthermore, there was a legacy of L.500 to his son, Alexander Inglis, to aid or advance him in any trade or profession he might choose, and in case of his decease, the said legacy of L.500 was to devolve upon his sister, Margaret Inglis, and her heirs for ever. And so ended the document; but, alas! alas! it turned out to be only a rough draft or scroll of what he intended. It was in some places interlined, and it was useless. It had neither signature nor date.

"It is null and void, null and void," said the Edinburgh lawyer, with much satisfaction that his client's property was not to be thus burdened.

"Null and void," responded the clergyman with equal satisfaction, although it could not affect *him* in any way; but he was not to be behind in shewing his importance by offering a remark, and he could not do wrong, he thought, in echoing the decision of so competent a judge as this writer to the Signet, who had all the exterior of a very great man.

"But we can all prove that it is in Sir Norman's own hand," said Eaglesford.

"That is not of the least consequence," said the writer.

"Not of the least," asseverated the clergyman.

"I know nothing about law," said Eaglesford.

"Lord grant we may all be long ignorant of it," ejaculated the other landed proprietor who was present. "That is *my* litany, Eaglesford."

"And I heartily add my amen to it," replied Eaglesford; "for I do not mean to prosecute my claims to Sir Norman's watch and seals, which he seems to have intended for me. God knows, I feel no disappointment on my own account that his will is a useless one, but it is a thousand pities on account of that poor lad and his sister, whom he seems to have wished to make some provision for."

"It was a sad mistake, indeed," said the Edinburgh lawyer, half maliciously. "But there is no help for it."

"Clearly not," responded the clergyman emphatically. And so ended the conference.

The party adjourned to dinner, after which the two landed gentlemen and the minister went away, leaving Mr Gowans and the other agent in possession of the mansion.

Those servants who had been long in the house, and who looked for some memorandum from their late master for their faithful services, waited with intense expectation to hear the result of the opening of Sir Norman's papers.

A vague statement,—one, however, which informed them that their hopes were to be disappointed,—was carried down stairs by the attendants, who overheard the conversation which took place among the gentlemen at dinner. But the individual who, of all others, was most nearly concerned, although she felt great anxiety as to where her future home would be, sought no premature disclosure, but sat

silently and sadly in her chamber, waiting with patience to be informed, as Mr Gowans had promised.

That she was not sent for directly the investigation was made, might have been to her an omen that there was no good news to communicate. But she thought not of that circumstance. She was inured to disappointment; she had endured weeks and years of suspense on a subject much nearer her heart, and she could bear delay in this.

When the gentlemen had departed, a servant, with best respects from Mr Gowans, delivered a message requesting to see her in the library. Margaret hastened down. Mr Gowans was there expecting her. He advanced as she entered, and, taking her hand, led her to a chair, and sat down at some distance opposite to her. A pause ensued, while he seemed considering how to open the communication. Margaret asked no questions.

"My dear Miss Inglis," said Gowans, attempting to talk with a firm voice. "I am sure, at least I hope, you have sufficient strength of mind to meet any disappointment which Providence may see fit to send. I fear, I greatly fear, that what your father kindly meant as a provision for you may not be available on account of a flaw or mistake in the testament."

The tears flowed fast from Margaret's eyes while he spoke, and she made no reply; but, after a pause, she said, "And what did Sir Norman intend respecting me?"

Mr Gowans proceeded to give her an account of what was in the will, and it was not without evident agitation that he did so; and her tears flowed faster as he went on, but at last, trying to compose her-

self, she wiped them, and said: "My fate seems a very hard one, and I do not think I have deserved it."

"My dear, dear Miss Inglis," replied Mr Gowans, "the deserts of many who possess much of the good things of this world are not to be put in the balance with yours, humanly speaking. But the almighty Disposer of all events judges not as men do, and he acts towards us not according to our merits, but according to his own purposes of mercy. Beloved, and I may say without flattery, beautiful Miss Inglis!"—and he approached and knelt down before her as he spoke,—“if you talk of deserts, I must feel myself altogether unworthy of you. But if you will not spurn me from you, my heart, the competence which I possess, my home, all shall be yours, and it will be the whole object of my existence to render you as happy as you deserve to be.” Mr Gowans clasped his hands as he uttered this, in all the fervour of supplication, and Margaret Inglis unable to make any reply, only continued to weep bitterly.

"Your kindness," at length said she, almost unintelligibly, while she wiped her tears, and tried to restrain them, "makes me more miserable than I already am; I cannot, I dare not accept of it, but do not think me ungrateful, I beseech you. I am a poor, helpless, hopeless being, and I wish to Heaven that this weary, weary existence were at an end." And she burst anew into a flood of bitter tears, while Mr Gowans, who was distressed beyond measure, soothed, flattered, and reasoned with her, hoping that it was only a transient excitement. But his efforts to compose her were in vain; hysterical tremors succeeded, and he was at last obliged, how-

ever reluctantly, to ring for the attendance of some of the female domestics of the house, and she was removed by them to her own apartment.

The altered form, the intense look of mental anguish, and the expressions of despondency and despair which she uttered, haunted the imagination of Mr Gowans, and a melancholy, miserable evening he passed, in the company of the new proprietor's agent, Mr Bland, to whom he found it difficult almost to be civil, when his mind was thus occupied by what was to him an all-engrossing object of interest; and it was not till he retired to his chamber, and knelt down before the Throne of Grace (though he felt it more difficult than usual to collect and fix his thoughts for the sacred duty), and offered up his earnest supplications and prayers to the God of all comfort, that his mind was brought to any degree of peacefulness and composure.

On the following day, he had an interview with Margaret. She was composed and resigned-looking, and expressed much shame and sorrow at appearing so much agitated on the preceding evening. Mr Gowans on that, and on other occasions, renewed and urged his suit, but with equally ill success.

Margaret was resolute in rejecting his proposals, and although she carefully avoided confessing that any other attachment was the cause, she spoke so determinedly as gave him not the shadow of a hope that she would change her mind. And so they parted.

While Mr Gowans remained in the house, he sought not to see her again. His business for the present at Ingliston was nearly concluded, and he was anxious to hasten his departure from a place

which had been to him a scene of so much disappointment. But, ere he went, he addressed a letter to Miss Inglis, taking leave of her, expressing his regard, his disappointment, and above all his fervent wishes for her happiness ; and as he knew, from his acquaintance with the affairs of the family, and from her own confession, that she had no pecuniary resources whatever, he ventured to enclose a letter of credit on his banker, authorizing her to draw, from time to time, what sums she might require. And so he departed from Ingliston.

When Miss Inglis received this communication, although she was much affected by his generosity, her first impulse was to hasten down stairs and return the draft, but she was informed that Mr Gowans had already left the house ; upon which she immediately resolved to write to him, to express her gratitude, and decline the accommodation.

It took her the greatest part of the day to compose and concoct this epistle, for she was a novice in the art of letter-writing ; but before she retired to rest, it was sealed and ready for the morning post. And now that she had rejected the friendship of the only individual who took an interest in her, she remained without any resource but to prepare herself to earn her bread among strangers.

It was announced by the Edinburgh lawyer that the new proprietor was to take possession of the house in a few weeks. It was also intimated that he was to bring the upper servants of his own establishment along with him ; but he had ordered that such of the inferior domestics at the mansion of Ingliston, as were willing to stay, should be retained in his service.

Was Margaret Inglis to be included in this number? Was she to solicit a menial's place in this new household? Her soul sickened at the very thought; nay, she *would* and *must* leave Ingliston, dear Ingliston, for ever, and seek a subsistence elsewhere. She could submit to indignities and hardships among strangers, but not among those whom she accounted her own blood.

She was now as an outcast on the earth, and she had not a friend in this wide world to whom she could apply. Her mother was dead, and she could not return to her own poor native village, and become a burden there. She had written some time before to her brother, but the letter was opened and returned by the people at the post-office, stating that no such person was to be found. *He* was probably in his grave, and, Oh! she wished with intense longing that she were in her grave also. Hers was a hard situation. She considered over and over and again what she was to do. At last it occurred to her to write to Sir Norman's sisters. She had seen them once in her life, on the occasion of her grandmother's death. They had behaved civilly to her. They were her nearest relations, and might afford her advice, and probably might offer her a home. There could be no impropriety in addressing them, and no time was to be lost. Preparations were making, with all possible dispatch, for the arrival of the new proprietor; all the servants who were not to be retained in his employment, were directed to remove on or about a certain day, and Margaret considered herself included in this order. But where to betake herself for the present was more than she could decide upon. She had not even a

place where she could go to, as a temporary home, and she had no money to procure her one. A few shillings, which Lady Grace had given her just before her death—it was her last gift—to buy a summer ribbon for her bonnet, was all she had, and she had kept this loose silver as something almost sacred, and with a determination never to spend it.

She forthwith addressed an humble letter to the eldest of the three Misses Inglis, intimating that she was obliged to leave Ingliston, and begging for their advice. In the course of a few days, a reply came. It was expressive of the joint regret of the three ladies for her unfortunate situation. But it appeared to them, that the wisest thing she could do, would be to make her case known to their brother's heir, Sir Archibald Hay Inglis. He was a member of Parliament, and a letter addressed to him would cost him nothing. Miss Inglis was very circumstantial in her advice, and gave Sir Archibald's address at full length; and, furthermore, she advised that Margaret should write to him without delay, and state forcibly what her late father had intended for her, and say that, notwithstanding the document he had left could not stand law, she hoped he would take into consideration her destitute circumstances, and allow her something out of the estate for her support. But in case Sir Archibald were burdened and tortured with a thousand similar applications, and might not see it prudent, nor find it convenient to grant her any thing, they would advise her to lose no time in trying to find a situation in a family similar to that which she had held with their late lamented mother Lady Grace; and they had heard that advertising in a newspaper that was widely

circulated, was the best way for securing this. But it appeared to them, to-wit, Miss Inglis and her sisters, for they all three had laid their heads together in giving this invaluable advice, it appeared to them that, besides advertising, it would not be amiss, when she wrote the said letter to Sir Archibald, to state that she wanted a situation of that kind. This would shew her industrious inclination, which would go a great way towards gaining his favour, and probably Lady Hay Inglis might retain her at Ingliston in her household. In concluding, Miss Inglis and her sisters thought it best to state freely and honestly, that, as for themselves, it was quite out of their way to attempt to patronise her. Indeed, all things considered, it rendered it a particularly delicate thing, and altogether unwarrantable and indecorous for them, single, *unmarried* females, to countenance a person in her situation, as it might seem an encouragement to VICE, and therefore, to prevent disappointment, she and her sisters plainly told her that it was out of their power to shew her any attention ; and she would, no doubt, see at once, that, circumstanced as they were, it was necessary they should maintain the utmost circumspection and propriety. Farther, they were sorry that their income was far from being large, and the establishment their station required them to support, obliged them to act with the greatest economy ; but if the enclosed one pound note would be of any service, they most willingly sent it as their joint contribution to forward her plans.

Poor, poor Margaret Inglis, how the tears did gush out when she read this epistle, and found all her own helplessness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"A thousand misfortunes are less affecting than a single kindness."

Margaret was sadly affronted at the paltry gift of the pound note. She was wounded to the quick at the heartless allusions to the unfortunate circumstances of her birth, and she was perplexed beyond measure at the task which was imposed upon her of writing to Sir Archibald Hay Inglis. But, after all, there was something of friendliness in the advice, and it seemed a reasonable one. Ladies like the Misses Inglis, who walked so circumspectly, must, she thought, be competent judges of the propriety of the measure they recommended her to adopt, and her young heart, after she had "wept till she had no more power to weep," caught a ray of hope and encouragement from the suggestion, and she determined, however arduous the undertaking, to follow it up ere she slept. And in all the freshness of her feelings on the subject, she penned a letter full of natural eloquence and simplicity, stating the particulars of her destitute situation, together with all that her aunts, the Misses Inglis, had directed her to say, but with one reservation. She shrunk from the idea of servitude in the family of Sir Archibald, and she named nothing about wanting a situation, lest he should take her at her word, and ask her to remain. The letter was dispatched, not without a fond anticipation that Sir Archibald would confirm her father's intended provision for her.

Though indulging such a hope, Margaret did not feel unreasonably impatient for the answer. By her

own calculation she thought she could not hear in less than ten or twelve days. But twelve days and upwards passed away, and no answer came. Another period of the same extent elapsed, and still no notice was taken. Her letter must have miscarried. This was the idea which suggested itself to her, for the possibility of him not replying to it, if it did reach him, never entered her head. She therefore, to make sure work of it, wrote a second time, and commenced very simply and naturally, by stating her fears that he had not received her former communication, and then recapitulated with renewed force all its contents. But this epistle met with the same fate. No reply to it was ever vouchsafed.

In the course of another week Sir Archibald's house-steward, and one or two other domestics, arrived to set things in order for the family. Margaret now felt her situation painful in the extreme. She was afraid of the family suddenly arriving, and nothing she dreaded more than the thoughts of remaining, and being detained in their service.

One of the Ingliston chamber-maids had got a situation in Glasgow, and was to proceed thither in a few days. She was a native of that city, and spoke of it to Miss Inglis as a fine place. This person was a respectable woman pretty far advanced in life, and had, more out of kind concern for her welfare, than from curiosity, asked Margaret regarding her future plans, and as she saw that Margaret was quite undetermined what to do, or where to go, she advised her to accompany her to Glasgow, and she could not fail to succeed in whatever line she might choose to set out.

It was an humbling alternative for Sir Norman's

daughter to be reduced to this. But necessity made her agree to the proposal. None knows with what a heavy heart she made preparations for her journey. She visited every room in the house, and every favourite spot about the grounds, and took leave of them all, and kissed every tree under whose shadow she had sat, and shed the bitterest tears she had ever shed in her life.

At last, at last the actual day of her departure came. She almost felt as if reason would have left her, when, for the last time, she looked out upon the green hills opposite her windows, and on the woods and fields of dear, dear Ingliston.

She, together with her travelling companion, was to catch the coach as it passed the porter's lodge at a certain hour in the forenoon. It drew near the time. Some of the women came up to her room for her luggage, and she followed them down stairs. The whole of the other servants, men and women, met her in the lobby to take leave, and every one was weeping bitterly.

"God bless you, Miss Margaret," said Mrs Mac-Martin, coming forward and taking her hand; "I never thought but that you would have been the lady of Ingliston, and I always treated you with respect accordingly. And has it really come to this? Has it really come to this, that you must take your leave like the meanest of us, and may be not so well provided as some? But, oh! Miss Margaret, if ye be in any straits, we are all your friends. The poorest among us would share our last bite with *you*, for you've been a sweet, pleasant creature to us all. And I'll sacrifice at this moment a crown-

piece if it will be of any service," and as she spoke she threw the piece of silver upon a bench of carved oak which stood in the entrance-hall. "And any one present," added she, "that refuses to give the same, or more, if they can, may they be both sick and sore at heart, that is my wish, and none to comfort them."

This appeal had the desired effect. The money was produced in an instant, and showered down upon the bench, and they who had it not in their pockets hastened to their coffers, among which latter was old Blair, the coachman—none of your charioteers swollen out with good living, but a tall, spare, grey-headed old man, almost too feeble-looking for his occupation; and he came forward with his mite, and laying it down upon the heap of silver on the seat, turned to Miss Inglis with extended hands, and said,

"May the blessing of the God of the orphan and the fatherless rest upon you, and if you have that ye canna be puir though ye may possess little o' the gear o' this warld." And Blair's eyes were dim with tears, and his voice trembled as he spoke, and he wrung her hand, while every thing that was transacting around Margaret seemed to her either a dream or an illusion of the senses. She was perfectly passive amid the bustle. Her joints were feeble, her countenance was pale and fixed as death; she neither spoke nor wept, nor offered any resistance, while Mrs MacMartin took her black reticule from her hand, and stuffed the uncounted sum of money into it; and other two of the women, each with an arm encircling her, assisted, or rather bore, her along

down the front steps, and down the avenue, followed by several of the men carrying the luggage.

It was late at night when Miss Inglis arrived in Glasgow. She was conducted through the streets by her companion Lizzy Buchanan, to the house of a respectable widow, Lizzy's aunt, who supported herself by letting two or three furnished apartments. Margaret met with a kind and hospitable reception from this person, with whom she took up her residence for the present; and no other lodger being in the house at that time, she might have enjoyed the quietness and privacy of the place, could she have reconciled her mind to the trials of her lot; but that was an effort beyond her ability.

Sleep at times afforded her a respite from absolute wretchedness. But what she felt when she awoke in the mornings and remembered her situation and the recent events of her life, is indescribable. Mrs Buchanan, who learnt from her niece all her history, and who was a person of a feeling heart as well as of excellent principles, took the greatest interest in her, and evinced it by every possible mark of kindness, and could her unfortunate guest have been amused and rendered happy, Mrs Buchanan's humble, but anxious endeavours to effect this might have been successful. But alas! poor Margaret continued the same pensive, melancholy creature, whom a weight of sorrow seemed bending to the grave.

Lizzy had gone home immediately to her situation, and, as her mistress was a lady of whom she had some previous acquaintance, she thought she might have an opportunity of recommending Margaret to her notice. She took with her some specimens of her young friend's handiwork, that she

might have them to shew as samples of her skill. And she proved that she did not neglect the opportunity; for, in a very short time, she joyfully brought Margaret an order to make a dozen and a half of wine-rubbers, and some trifling fancy articles.

Lizzy's mistress, Mrs Spiers, was a widow; but her sons, who had succeeded their father in a commercial line, resided with her, and her house was one of continual bustle and company. She had lived luxuriously all her life, and was not of active habits; but she was good-natured and of a benevolent disposition, and had much in her power when she liked to bestir herself, which she sometimes could do upon an occasion of novel interest. She was interested with Margaret's history, and being much pleased with her work, paid her handsomely for it, and sent a message that she wished to see her, which was a great deal for Mrs Speirs, whose extreme indolence and self-indulgence made her very difficult of access. Her health also, which was delicate, seldom admitted of her being disturbed with morning intruders, and her evenings were always occupied with company.

On seeing Miss Inglis, she expressed great satisfaction with her handiwork, inquired into her plans, and volunteered to talk to her acquaintances about a situation for her.

Margaret endeavoured to express her gratitude and thanks for favours which her spirit secretly revolted from; but it was her fate to require them, and she must submit.

Mrs Speirs was as good as her word, for she did speak to her friends; and Margaret, besides getting supplies of work from time to time, was sent for on

more than one occasion by ladies who wished to negotiate either for themselves or others about engaging her to service.

About six weeks passed in this manner, and Margaret, what with her industry and the cash she had brought with her, contrived to defray her expenses. These certainly were trifling, for the good woman with whom she lodged refused any remuneration for the room she occupied, and made but a very moderate charge for any outlay; and this she would not even have done, but she could not, without embarrassing herself, have been at any extra expense on her account, her own circumstances being very reduced. She had once been in affluence, but her husband had failed and left her destitute.

One morning, a message was brought from Mrs Speirs to Margaret, informing her that a particular friend of hers from England wished to engage a person in her family, as a sort of superintendent of the servants and assistant to herself in domestic duties. This English lady was lodging at the Buck's Head, and Margaret was directed to repair thither without delay. Margaret had a lingering love for her own native land. Her hopes were still centred there. If these hopes, however, were to be blighted, and if her condition were never to be improved, then she would gladly have left for ever the scene of all her disappointments. With feelings mixed up both of hopes and fears of success, she hastened to the place of appointment at the time specified, or rather before it; for her kind friend Mrs Buchanan always urged her to be prompt in attending to any thing which might be for her advantage. She arrived at the hotel. The lady was indisposed, and could not

see her ; but she was directed to come back at ten next morning. At ten o'clock next morning she went, and after a station in an anteroom for an hour, she had an audience of the lady.

The lady was highly pleased with Margaret. She liked her appearance and her modesty ; and Margaret was not otherwise than pleased with the lady, who was very handsome, very affable, polite, and fluent in her talk. By what she said, it appeared that she intended to receive her into the family on terms of perfect equality with themselves. Margaret could not object to the arrangements. There were no drawbacks about salary : Margaret made no extravagant demands ; indeed, she made no demands at all, but left it entirely to the lady herself. The agreement was nearly made, when, upon Margaret making some inquiries into the nature of the duties required of her, the lady informed her that she kept one of the most approved private asylums in England for the insane. Margaret was much hurt, and the conference was soon ended. The lady parted from her with regret, and not without using some persuasion to induce her to accept of the place ; while Margaret could not but feel, that a little consideration on the part of her patronizing friend Mrs Spiers might have saved her all this fruitless trouble.

CHAPTER XIX.

“Βλέπετε ἀπο τῶν γραμματίων.”

It was nearly twelve o'clock when Margaret came down stairs after this disagreeable negociation, and in crossing the lobby on her way out, a gentleman issuing from a room-door arrested her attention, as if about to accost her.

“From Ingliston you are ?” said he, in a tone of interrogation.

“Yes, sir,” replied Margaret, while her heart began to flutter, and she recognised the stranger to be Sir Archibald Inglis's law-agent.

“Pray, walk this way,” said he, and he re-opened the door of the parlour out of which he had just come, and ushered her in to it.

“Ah !” I am glad I have seen you,” said he in a friendly tone, and one which implied he had something agreeable to communicate, and the richness of his remarkably fine voice sounded most imposingly in the ears of Margaret Inglis, reaching to the very centre of her heart with hope-stirring inspiration. He pointed to a chair for her to be seated, and took his own station on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire.

“You have friends living in this house, have you ?” said he with an inquiring look.

“None, sir,” replied Margaret.

“None !” repeated he ; “you are not living here yourself ?”

“No, sir,” said Margaret ; “I only came to see a lady.”

"Oh! Mrs Campbell of Westerfield, I suppose?" pursued the gentleman; "she is from your part of the country, and is here just now."

"No," replied Margaret again; "it was an English lady."

"Oh! a friend of yours, did you say?" inquired Mr Bland.

"No, sir, I never saw the lady before. I only came to speak to her on business," said Margaret.

"Oh! exactly," replied the lawyer. "Any thing connected with your money matters? Perhaps I might be able to give you some information," and he stopped short for her answer.

Alas! the poor girl had no money matters to come about; but the hint that he threw out regarding his ability to inform her on that head gave her some encouragement to be more communicative about the nature of her visit to the hotel, and without giving him the trouble of fishing it out any more, she plainly told him that she had come after a situation as a companion to a lady, but that it would not suit.

"Ah!" that was unlucky," said Mr Bland, stretching the wrist of his right arm out of his sleeve, and raising his hand aloft, and applying the extreme point of the nail of his fourth finger to the crown of his head, and performing in a twinkling a sort of tiny, impalpable movement with the said nail, on the fiftieth part of a square inch's surface, which movement might be termed an elegant exhibition of the art of scratching. "Ah! that was unlucky; but you must not despond. Something good, I have no doubt, will turn up for you. I wish to goodness I had known sooner. You might have been a great acquisition in my own family. But there is no saying

what may occur. I may yet be able to befriend you ;” and Mr Bland, while delivering this friendly remark, scratched his right cheek with the tip of his thumb, and then reposed both his hands at his back among the tails of his coat.

“ I am very much indebted to you, sir,” said Margaret Inglis, impressed with a deep sense of his disinterested kindness. “ But the way in which you could oblige me most would be to speak to Sir Archibald about the allowance which Sir Norman intended for me. I cannot think but that I have some claim to it ; but I have nobody to take my cause in hand, or to speak for me ; and although I wrote twice to Sir Archibald on the subject, he never answered the letters.

“ You wrote twice, did you ?” said Mr Bland in a tone of surprise, and changing his posture, and assuming an attitude more after the living statue fashion. “ Who advised you to that step ? Was it that Gowans, a well-meaning enough, but weak, ignorant lad ? Writing to him yourself, I assure you, was not the way to gain Sir Archibald. He is a particular, very particular man, and it has probably knocked the thing on the head altogether. You should have spoken to me first. I have often thought of your situation since I saw you at Ingliston. But you were so shy. I suppose Gowans represented me as some formidable enemy, eh ?”

“ Not at all, sir,” replied Margaret. “ Mr Gowans never, I believe, mentioned your name to me, and he knew nothing of my writing to Sir Archibald, for I did it entirely by the advice of Sir Norman’s sisters, the Miss Inglises, and I regret to this hour that I did it, but it cannot be recalled.”

"Nay, don't be uneasy about it," said Mr Bland, who detected a few tears stealing down her cheeks. "It is a hundred chances to one that Sir Archibald never read the letters, for all that sort of papers he throws aside to his secretary. But I wish to goodness you had a share of what those ladies who advised you draw from the estate themselves. It would be a thousand times better bestowed; but this is a strange world, Miss Inglis, and things are very strangely divided. But I should not say so after all," continued he with a smile. "*You* have no reason to complain. *You* have been liberally dealt with. Nature has bestowed upon you far better gifts than money. But I do not like to see one of the fairest faces she ever formed clouded with sorrow, and wet with tears. Pray, leave me your address before you go, and I shall keep you in remembrance."

Margaret Inglis rose to depart, and begging for a slip of paper to write down where she lived, he quickly furnished a card from his pocket and noted it down himself.

Mr Bland shook hands with her at parting, and again promised to befriend her, while she endeavoured to express her sincere gratitude for his unexpected kindness.

When she went home to her lodging, she communicated to her friend, Mrs Buchanan, all that had passed, and Mrs Buchanan, who was highly pleased with her account of her interview with Mr Bland, could not help expressing her astonishment and admiration at the wonderful goodness of Providence in bringing about this unlooked-for meeting with this worthy gentleman, who was likely to prove such a

valuable friend and benefactor ; and it so happened that Mr Bland was as good as his word, for he had kept Margaret in remembrance, and next morning at an early hour a porter brought her the following note :—

Dear Madam—As I start for Edinburgh to-day by the mail at twelve, I would be glad to have an opportunity of a few moments' conversation regarding the subject you mentioned yesterday. You will find me here at half-past ten, if you will take the trouble to call. Yours, &c. &c. in haste.

Buck's Head,
Wednesday morning.

FRED. BLAND.

"Trouble!" said Mrs Buchanan, as she took off her spectacles, and folded the note, after having read it with much satisfaction. "Trouble it can be none, but a pleasure. Do be pointed, my dear Miss Inglis, in waiting on the worthy gentleman. Oh, the wonderful ways of Providence in raising up such a friend!" And the good woman hurried the breakfast, and urged her young friend to make herself ready, and she kept urging her with motherly anxiety till she succeeded in getting Margaret fairly off to be at the Buck's Head a full half hour before the time appointed. The waiter made some demur about ushering the young lady into Mr Bland's room, as he had got orders to that effect if any body called. But on Margaret's informing him that she had been sent for, he immediately admitted her to where the gentleman was seated at breakfast in his shawl dressing-gown, and scarlet slippers. When

Miss Inglis saw him thus, she hesitated to intrude, and apologised for being too early. Mr Bland said it was of no consequence, begged of her to sit down, and asked if she had breakfasted, to which she replied in the affirmative.

"I was anxious to ask you," said Mr Bland gravely, while he cooled his tea in his saucer; "I was anxious to ask you if you had any particular tie in this town which keeps you here; any prospect, I mean, of advancing yourself in any way. Bless me, I think, if you have not, you would be much better elsewhere. In Edinburgh, for instance, where you would be on the spot if any thing were casting up; whereas when you are at a distance, the best thing possible might be absolutely sacrificed through unavoidable delay, for by the time one writes, and so forth, so much time is lost."— Mr Bland paused to drink his tea, and Miss Inglis acknowledged that she had no reason for remaining in Glasgow more than any where else; but that circumstances had led her thither, and she had been most fortunate in meeting with a friendly old lady to lodge with, but she went on to say that she would do whatever Mr Bland thought most advisable.

"Well," replied Mr Bland; "it occurred to me after you went away yesterday, for I have weighed your case with great attention; it occurred to me that it would be a good plan for you to take a step over to Edinburgh. I have much in my power there, but nothing here. This is not the place in fact for *you*; and another thing, there is some prospect of Sir Archibald being there, in the course of a fortnight. It would not be amiss if you could

then see him yourself. At all events, it could be no loss for you to be on the spot."

There seemed to Margaret much reason in what Mr Bland said, and she expressed, with her own natural grace and eloquence, her thanks to him for his consideration; but at the same time, she was conscious that it was impossible for her to change her residence at pleasure, and she said so to Mr Bland; but from an innate feeling of delicacy, lest it should seem to suggest the idea of a demand upon his liberality, she forbore to say that it was her total want of pecuniary means which stood in the way of her going where she pleased. But, Oh! in her heart she wished, secretly and fondly wished, that she might be led by circumstances to where there was more probability than in the place where she at present obscurely sojourned, of hearing of Charles Weirham, or being found out by him, if he were returning from sea. This wish was, in fact, the secret mainspring of all her actions, and the ruling motive of her whole existence; and there began to break in upon her a glimmering of hope, that, by her being brought in contact with persons connected with Ingliston, she would speedily see, or at least hear of, the object of her affections. All this flashed through her imagination in a thousandth part less time than is here taken to express it; and the consciousness of what was passing in her mind—hopes, indeed, which were much nearer her heart than those of Sir Archibald's favour—caused her face to flush. And though the flush was slight, it was, however, discernible to the eye of one watching her so narrowly, as Mr Bland at that moment seemed

to be ; and, perhaps, the being conscious that his eye was upon her, while she was cherishing one of those reveries, in which she often indulged, caused the blush, as if *he* could have detected the secret thoughts of her heart.

“ Nay, don’t be thanking me till I have done you some service,” said Mr Bland courteously ; but withdrawing his gaze, and appearing fully occupied with putting butter on a piece of toast, “ I may be able to do nothing, absolutely nothing, with Sir Archibald,” added he, never raising his eyes ; “ for as I told you before, he is a very strange man. But upon my honour, I think if he saw you himself, he could hardly resist your claims.”

“ But, Sir,” said Margaret, to whom her new benefactor’s remarks seemed most encouraging, “ I have no friends in Edinburgh, or indeed any where ; for, even in this place, if I had not been indebted to some of the meanest servants in my father’s house, I would have been altogether an unprotected, helpless stranger ;”——and Margaret’s heart swelled, and her feelings rose as she spoke, and an indignant flush of wounded pride at mortifying recollections, which she conjured up, crimsoned her countenance, and she gave vent to some touching expressions of hopeless despondency, which seemed either to affect Mr Bland, or to annoy him, and he rose suddenly and rung to have the breakfast things removed, as if to change the current of the conversation. This seemed to Margaret a sort of signal for her to depart. She was not altogether pleased at the interruption made by ringing for the waiter, which, she thought, might have been deferred till she was gone.

"Pray, don't hurry away," said Mr Bland, looking at his watch, and motioning to her to resume the seat from which she had just risen, while he placed himself in an arm-chair opposite to her.

"You complain," remarked he, when the waiter had finally withdrawn, "of want of friends; but I think you have a chance of gaining friends wherever you go. That is my opinion, and I place myself upon the roll first, as one of your most stanch ones, if you will only cheer up, and set this strange world, and all its unreasonableness, a little more at defiance than you seem to do. A stout heart—you know the proverb, I daresay."

"No, sir," replied Margaret, who was somewhat at a loss to comprehend the scope of this speech.

"Well, well, there is no matter," rejoined Mr Bland; "you will learn every thing in due time. But we must to the point now; it is getting on," and he consulted his watch a second time.

"I fear I am encroaching too long on your time," said Margaret, who was beginning to be perplexed as to what she should say or do, to bring the conference to a close, and still more so as she thought of Mr Bland's advice, and knew not what to decide upon.

"Not yet, not yet," said Mr Bland, as he saw her rising to go. It is only half-past ten. I start at twelve, and have plenty of time. But have you made up your mind to go to Edinburgh, as I was suggesting?" and as he spoke he again fixed his eyes intently upon her.

"I would require to consult first," said Margaret, hesitating.

"With whom?" interrupted he. "You have no

friends here, that is to say, no particular friends whose judgment you could rely upon more than upon your own. And I am safe to say you can have none any where that thinks more highly of you than I do, or could be more anxious for your welfare, or willing to serve you with any advice. But take your own mind on the subject. A person endowed with your sense and understanding must see the reasonableness of my suggestions, and I fairly told you that I could not forward your views while you were at a distance ; nay, I may not be able to do it, even if you were on the spot, for I do not wish to raise false hopes, and," added he with a smile, while he changed from the grave tone in which he uttered the above, " if you are afraid of the costs of the journey, you must just put it all to Sir Archibald's account. Indeed, you have a good right to send him in a bill of charges. But seriously," continued he, resuming his grave tone, " you need not be concerned in the mean time about your expenses. We surely could contrive to treat you hospitably for a while in Edinburgh, till we see what arrangements may be made. Let me see—I daresay we could manage to put you up with ourselves, although we are a pretty large family, stowed in rather a small house ; but, at all events, I know where you would be most comfortable, with a friend of my own, a fine motherly woman, who would do all in her power to render you happy. What do you say to it ? You observe, my dear Miss Inglis, that I am merely suggesting the thing, and leave it entirely to your own discretion, to adopt the plan or not as you think best. But it is what I conceive to be for your advantage, and if you think seriously of coming, the

sooner the better. This is Wednesday, say Saturday, and I would meet you myself at the coach when you arrived, or have a person waiting; and you need give yourself no trouble in the mean time, for I would make arrangements here to have a seat secured for you on that day. What say you?"

Margaret was as much puzzled as ever she had been in her life, when all the arrangements were thus laid down to her, and she was called upon to decide. There was something tempting in the proposal to one who was secretly repining at the obscure condition to which she was doomed, and the almost hopeless possibility of emerging out of it by any exertion of her own. But, although she never for a moment doubted the integrity of Mr Bland, she was somewhat staggered at the thoughts of going to a strange place, at the mere suggestion of a stranger, and she honestly declared herself to be quite at a loss what to determine.

"Then if *you* be at a loss," said Mr Bland, rising and coming towards her, "allow *me* to decide for you. Take my advice; be ready on Saturday. You have nothing to do, but to step into the mail; give yourself no farther concern about the matter. I fear I must hasten now to prepare for my own journey. Good bye to you till we meet again," and he shook hands most cordially with her, and wished her all prosperity and happiness, as he shewed her out, and she felt totally unable to make any objection to what he had arranged, but was anxious, beyond measure, to have Mrs Buchanan's sanction to the plan, and then she would have felt reconciled to it herself.

There are not only two ways of telling a story.

but fifty ways, even without altering the facts. The variety of tones of voice in which it may be told, makes each a different impression on the mind of the hearer.

Margaret related nearly verbatim all that had passed between her and her new friend and patron; and though she did not alter or conceal any part of it, she certainly gave to all that he had said that emphatic tone of sincere kindness, which it had appeared to herself to possess; and her landlady pronounced Mr Bland to be, in her estimation, the most generous, humane, disinterested Christian she had ever heard of in her life. This opinion of Mrs Buchanan's took a load off Margaret's mind. Her misgivings melted away, and it seemed to justify to herself the acquiescence she had given to the stranger's proposal; and she was so far entangled now, that she felt it would be a more unpleasant task to break up the arrangement than to follow it out.

CHAPTER XX.

"Oh heaven! that one might read the book of fate."

KING HENRY IV.

Mrs Buchanan did not fail to inspirit Margaret with hopes that great things would result from this auspicious event; and, as usual, she urged her on with her preparations for the journey.

But, as the time drew near for her departure, she could not overcome the disquietude which she felt at the prospect of going among entire strangers, although her kind hostess expatiated on the wonder-

ful ways of Providence, and endeavoured to impress upon her the duty of being grateful for such uncommon mercies.

"My dear," said she, after a copious dissertation on the subject to her inexperienced guest, "you have been largely dealt with, and every one cannot tell the same tale. There is me myself for instance,—and I am not reflecting nor repining when I say it,—there is me at this moment, old as I am, and straitened as I am and helpless, I know not the living person who would make me such an offer as has been made to you; nay, all the friends I ever had were always more ready to take from me than to give,—that is to say when I had it, and now when I have it not neither to take to myself nor to give to others, never one so much as comes to ask how I am, or if I need any thing. Now, my dear, this is the way of the world, as I have learned from experience; and you, perhaps, will learn it from the same before you be as old as I am; therefore, it should make you prize the more such an uncommon manifestation of friendship as this excellent gentleman has shewn." With such discourse as this the worthy old lady encouraged Margaret; and when Saturday came, she accompanied her to the coach-office, and found that Miss Inglis's name was booked, and her place in the mail actually secured and paid for.

The Glasgow mail arrived at the Black Bull in Edinburgh between four and five o'clock. A person with a street coach was waiting for Miss Inglis. This was a sedate-looking young man, apparently one of Mr Bland's clerks, who paid her all becoming respect and attention, and they drove to a house in one of the principal central streets of the New Town.

"Is this Mr Bland's house?" inquired Margaret at her conductor, when he called to the driver to stop.

"No, ma'am," replied the young man, "but it is where his writing-chambers are." And, on the vehicle stopping, a maid-servant had the street-door opened in readiness for the arrival.

Miss Inglis was received into a large, handsome, front parlour, by a tall lady of colour dressed in black figured silk, with a pink gauze turban on her head, from beneath which flowed down on each side of her tremendously ugly visage a profusion of light brown, smooth, glossy ringlets, such as never grew in a mulatto's head.

"You have got a most charming day for your journey," said the ugly lady, in milder and softer tones than could have been expected to issue from the vast potato trap which gave utterance to the remark; and she obligingly hastened to relieve Miss Inglis from some small packages which she carried in her hands.

"Is this the motherly woman that Mr Bland spoke of?" thought Margaret to herself, while her heart sickened at her touch, as she officiously untied the strings of her bonnet and cloak and took them off for her; and, in a trice, she produced from her side-board wine and cordials, of which she gave Margaret her choice.

After this hospitable reception, dinner was served up, and, in rapid succession, tea and supper; and the lady, who did ample justice both to the viands and the liquors herself, pressed her guest heartily to partake, and if Margaret's enjoyment had consisted in eating and drinking, she might have been very hap-

py that night. But alas! all that was set before her remained almost untouched ; for her heart was like to break, and she never could be reconciled to the hideous physiognomy that stared her in the face.

The lady was kind and courteous beyond measure, and did every thing to amuse her guest. She told her of all the things that were to be seen in town, and what she intended to take her to see ; for she said that Mr Bland had desired her to shew her every attention. And she entered upon the good qualities of that gentleman, and described him as a most excellent, exemplary, religious man, greatly respected in his profession, and, moreover, an elder of the church. She said she had known him for many, many years: he had had his office long in her house; his clerks occupied part of the sunk story, and he himself had, besides, two business-rooms on the ground-floor. She also informed her guest that she let the drawing-room flat as furnished lodgings, and it had been occupied for the last six months by an English family that had just left her, and as long as these apartments remained empty, Miss Inglis might take the use of the whole range of them, and make herself quite at home ; but, if they happened to get another tenant, she must just use the freedom to take her up to the attics beside herself.

Thus, the lady of colour went on with her discourse, giving all this and much more information and local news to Margaret, who would have given all the world to be back in her own quiet, obscure retreat at Mrs Buchanan's ; and she felt the most solitary, unprotected, friendless being imaginable, when conducted to her chamber, a large, back drawing-room, furnished as a sleeping apartment, and

was left alone for the night as the sole occupant of the first floor of the house.

She arose next morning unrefreshed with sleep, for she had never shut her eyes. Breakfast was ready when she descended to the parlour, and the hostess Mrs Wildgoose was in a bustle to get ready for church, and she offered to accommodate Margaret with any articles of dress which she might require for accompanying her.

"I am not quite well,—I cannot go to church to-day," said Margaret, unable longer to restrain herself, and bursting into tears. Mrs Wildgoose expressed her sorrow and disappointment, and patted her gently on the shoulder, and asked her why she cried, and offered to stay at home with her ; but to this Miss Inglis strenuously objected, and Mrs Wildgoose was persuaded to leave her to herself during the forenoon, and she gave her the newspapers for her amusement when she was gone. Margaret had not seen a newspaper since she left Ingliston ; and, after she had sauntered about the room in a despairing way and wearied herself with weeping, she took it up, and turned it over, and read here and there with little interest, till her eye lighted on the following paragraph :—

"In reference to the melancholy announcement of the death of Lord Weirham, which took place at Genoa after a short illness, we understand that his lordship was on his way to England to be married to the beautiful and accomplished Miss Arkford, only daughter of Lord Arkford, and sole representative of that noble house. Lord Weirham's brother, the Honourable Charles Weirham, lieutenant on board his Majesty's ship ——, will succeed to the title and

estates as Lord Weirham, Baron of Weirham, Drumspindal, and Boghall."

Margaret Inglis read the intimation over and over, and over again. How she felt or what she felt is altogether indescribable. This event seemed like something which was to decide her destiny. It placed Charles in a position which rendered him completely his own master, and she had a thousand times heard him wish that, for her sake, he *were* his own master; but, at the same time, this unlooked-for event placed him in a sphere far beyond what her most sanguine imagination could ever hope that she should occupy.

She well knew, however, that all depended on him. But, had he ceased to remember her? That was a thought past endurance. She had recourse to a small gold locket set with pearls, which was hid in her bosom, and contained a lock of Weirham's bright and beautiful hair; and she gazed at it as if to gain from *it* some assurance of his constancy: but it could give her no information. It was a token of his regard; but, did it remain a proof of his faithfulness? Had he forgotten her? was the suggestion which occurred again and again. She had not, since they parted, had the slightest memorial from him, to shew that he still kept her in remembrance. But then, again, she thought of his words at parting, and *they* were irrevocable. He had bound himself by an oath to love her for ever, and none but her only; and his whispered vows still rung in her ears; and she thought she heard again and again repeated, the solemn invocation which he made to Heaven when he bade her trust him till death, and she seemed to feel upon her lips his warm kisses, and anew to drink in

with her ears all those gentle flatteries, and expressions of endearment whereby he wound himself around her virgin heart; and she became wrapt in imagination in the enjoyment of some of those delightful moments of her existence which she had passed in the beloved retreats of Ingliston.

But the spell was suddenly broken, and those bright passages of her life which her fancy seemed to be realizing, vanished away on the entrance of her hostess, and just at the moment when her imagination was resting with the delight of devoted admiration on the dear remembered image of him who possessed one of the finest and most beautiful of human countenances, the dark, bedizened visage of Mrs Wildgoose, shining greasy bright, like a smoked pig's face, glared at her, with a goblin-like aspect, and made her start from her reverie.

Confused and frightened at the unexpected interruption, she hurried the locket into her bosom, and threw away the newspaper, and attempted to speak, but could not find voice to articulate a syllable.

"You are better, I hope," said Mrs Wildgoose, throwing off her shawl, and complaining that she was overpowered with heat, and *gone* with thirst; "You will be much the better of something to eat," continued she, "for you took no breakfast," and she rang the bell, and ordered up the pork-ham, and a bottle of porter, on which she regaled herself, but Margaret was altogether unable to follow her example.

"A journey sometimes hurts the appetite for a day or two," remarked the landlady, helping herself to another slice, and emptying the remains of the bottle of porter into her own tumbler.

"I believe so," said Margaret feebly.

"I am absolutely unable to go back to church this afternoon," rejoined the other, "I was so overheated this morning, and I agree so ill with heat, and crowded places. But I think we might take a walk on the Calton Hill. The air would do you good, and you would see a fine view;" and she entered upon a full and particular description of the beauty of the prospect from the Calton Hill, and went on proposing and planning what route they were to take, and how they were to spend the remainder of the day, to all which, Margaret offered no remark and no objection, for she was almost, if not altogether, unconscious of what was said.

It is well known that nothing unhinges one more than any unexpected intelligence regarding what interests one deeply, and if the subject of interest be of a secret nature, known only to ourselves, the semblance of guiltiness attaches to it, and we are haunted by the humbling fears of detection.

Margaret Inglis was resolute in the morning in refusing to go to church, but now her firmness was gone; and, although as averse as ever to go abroad with the fantastic woman, she had become quite passive. What she had read in the newspapers was an overwhelming subject of thought, and had roused up such a train of recollections, that she scarcely saw or heard any thing that was passing.

She had given her assent to what was proposed, almost without knowing it; and her walking dress was put on, and she was fairly out upon the street, arm in arm with Mrs Wildgoose, and had got the length of St Andrew's Square, in a state nearly of

unconsciousness, till her attention was recalled by her companion punching her in the side with her elbow ; and on raising her eyes, which had been fixed in deep reverie upon the pavement, they encountered those of a gentleman, who was close upon them, and staring her broad in the face.

"What an impudent fellow," said Mrs Wildgoose, drawing down her veil, as if to defy any further scrutiny of her own charms, and on she walked with an air of dignified virtue, and Margaret with a feeble step and downcast look, tried to keep pace with her majestic conductress, while her heart misgave her for having left the house.

The bells for the afternoon church had ceased before they set out. There were few people on the streets to interrupt their progress, and on they went.

"There is Mr So-and-so, the advocate," remarked Mrs Wildgoose, as they commenced their perambulations round the Calton Hill, and giving her companion another jog with the elbow, to call her attention to a couple of gentlemen, who were walking before them.

"Who can that be that is with him ?" added Mrs Wildgoose, hastening past them, and looking round in their faces, to make herself sure of who the other person was ; "Oh, it is Mr Such-another-thing," said she in a loud whisper, as she recognised the gentleman in question to be a celebrated member of the Faculty. "He is one of our greatest men in town," continued she, in the same tone ; "you have often heard of him, no doubt. You must really get a look of him, I wish only you would look round."

"I saw them both already," said Margaret, who,

besides having no curiosity on the subject, felt sadly annoyed, and her natural modesty would not have allowed her to look round for the world.

"But you *must* see him," persisted Mrs Wildgoose, "and tell me if you think he looks clever." And, after they had arrived at a certain turn of the road, she suddenly wheeled about with her companion, as if they had gone the whole extent of the walk they meant to take; and so, by this manoeuvre, they met full in the face the two gentlemen, who were in deep conversation; and the word "Beautiful!" from the one, echoed by the words "Very beautiful!" from the other, struck Margaret's ear as she passed by them. But, whether it referred to herself or something they were otherwise discussing, for they looked very grave and scarcely seemed to observe her, it was not for her to judge; so round the hill Mrs Wildgoose and Margaret went in an opposite direction, and were allowed to pass unmolested and unadmired by parties of strolling trades-lads and groups of idle boys, and now and then some sauntering sentimental shopman or spruce writer's clerk crossed their path; and most of these worthies were known by sight or designation to Mrs Wildgoose, and pointed out to her companion accordingly.

"What a charming walk we have had!" said Mrs Wildgoose, throwing herself down on a sofa on her return home. "But I am so tired and thirsty, that I think, if you have no objections, we shall just have tea, and order an early supper."

Margaret, of course, had no objections. The tea was brought, and at half-past eight the supper. But just as they were in the act of sitting down to that

latter meal, Mr Bland was announced. He was invited by the landlady to join them at table ; but he refused, and ordered lights in the mean time to one of his own business apartments, and went to read those letters which might be lying there for him. Supper was hastily despatched ; as Mrs Wildgoose said she thought it likely that Mr Bland had some private business to talk about with Miss Inglis : and she politely withdrew when he returned, to afford him an opportunity.

Mr Bland commenced to talk first freely and fluently upon subjects of general interest or of no interest at all ; and Margaret, notwithstanding her limited information, or perhaps total ignorance, on many of the subjects he touched upon, acted the part of an intelligent listener, which is perhaps one of the most winning characters one can assume : and when she *did* speak, she replied to his remarks with so much modesty and good sense, that Mr Bland seemed perfectly delighted, and prolonged his stay to a very late hour ; but, though Mrs Wildgoose considerably offered no interruption by intruding, still he broached not the private business it was supposed he had come about.

At last, when he rose to depart, he intimated that he had something to remark, which, however, the lateness of the hour prevented him from entering upon at present ; but next time he called,—perhaps to-morrow,—he would have time to explain what had occurred to him. And so he went away, leaving a very favourable impression on the mind of his young protégée.

To-morrow came, and his business brought him in the morning as usual to the house, and he was

occupied for a couple of hours with his clerks and his clients ; but, after that was over, he went up to the principal drawing-room, and Miss Inglis was sent for to attend him there. This interview passed somewhat like the one on the preceding evening,—it came to nothing, although, by his manner, he seemed like one who had always something of importance to communicate or suggest ; and Margaret sat in full expectation of him entering at large upon her affairs, while he kept lightly skimming from one subject to another in a desultory way, till the time came that he was obliged to depart.

Day after day she had successive meetings of this sort, and he never once alluded to the object of her coming to town, or of Sir Archibald's expected arrival, or any thing that concerned her future arrangements ; but Margaret, who was hearing his praises constantly sounded by Mrs Wildgoose, and who really herself was flattered by his conduct, imputed all this to the best of motives, and thought it was his delicacy in keeping off these topics, till he had some pleasing intelligence to surprise her with. But, then, why did he seek to see her at all in the mean time, if he had nothing particular to communicate ? This was a question which once or twice urged itself upon her : but, although she could not solve it, she had no anxiety to make him discontinue those visits, which, she had every reason to believe, were purely complimentary : and there was something in his manner altogether so soothing to her feelings, and so calculated to reconcile her to her situation, that she felt always better pleased with him every time they met, and more satisfied to wait with patience to see the issue of events. And, though

he did continue to tantalize her with hints of something that he had to say, he skilfully waived every thing like discussion or interrogation on her part, so that she found his manner of managing the conversation made it impossible for her flatly to ask a question, unless she had resolutely predetermined to hazard giving offence.

Mr Bland had qualities which few women could resist. Added to a very fine person, he had all the suavity and grace of an accomplished gentleman ; and, as he was decidedly within the pale of the religious circles of the town, he had in his manner all the unction of an established Christian. He possessed the happy talent of making every woman with whom he conversed rise in her own estimation, and feel herself to be of an importance in society, of which she was not previously aware. The homeliness of the plainest features seemed to melt away in his presence, to the astonishment and delight of the conscious, unhappy possessor of them ; and the being noticed, in however casual a way, by a person of such acknowledged superior gifts, was a distinction most eagerly sought for by hundreds of female votaries.

Mr Bland was a married man, so that not a shadow of impropriety could attach to this. There could be no design in it at all, but esteem for so bright a character ; and it is to be believed that the stern dowagers and winning matrons, pensive widows and pious daughters, withering aunts and blooming nieces, who sought after him, admired, adored, and courted him, were perfectly immaculate in themselves, and in their motives. But so it was, Mr Bland was the most popular man of his time among

the Edinburgh coteries of well-intentioned females who club together to do good and to eschew evil.

But it must not be supposed that in gaining this popularity he made himself what is called *cheap*; far from it. He was dignified, and difficult of access. He granted few or no favours, but never flatly refused any, and he strewed hopes and promises with a liberal hand, and he smiled benignantly when he could or would do no more.

CHAPTER XXI.

"We may gather honey from the weed,
And make a moral of the devil himself."

KING HENRY V.

In the mean time Mrs Wildgoose did all in her power to amuse her guest. She dragged her about to see all the sights which cost nothing, to-wit, the Castle and the exterior of Holyrood-house, Heriot's Hospital and St Bernard's Well, the Parliament Square and the fish-market, the city churches in rotation, and she took her to hear the organ at the Roman Catholic chapel, and the pair were absolutely like Beauty and the Beast, going about the town: they were eyed through many a quizzing-glass by day, and jostled in the dusk of the evening by loungers in the streets, on which occasions Mrs Wildgoose always asserted her own dignity and purity of character, by threatening to call the police, and by making so much ado, that they generally gathered a mob about them, and got hustled in good earnest before they got out of it again.

This was a life which Margaret was scarcely able

to endure, and she knew not when it was likely to terminate. She took no interest in any thing that she was taken to see, indeed, it was all a punishment to her, and she felt herself under such doubtful patronage when she went abroad with Mrs Wildgoose, that she resolved to confine herself to the house under some pretext till Mr Bland returned, for he had gone on business to the country, and then she intended to complain to him of the unpleasantness of her situation.

She accordingly said to her hostess she was ill, and she kept her room, and her illness was not altogether feigned, although not what might have prevented her from going out of doors ; but if sleeplessness, want of appetite, mental anxiety, almost distraction of mind, and a palpitation of the heart, so that she often felt as if it would beat its last ; if these were symptoms of indisposition, she had them to a degree verging upon misery, although none who saw her could have guessed the extent of what she suffered. Mrs Wildgoose expressed much concern for her guest's health, and she made water-gruel for her, and she mulled porter, and spiced wine, and brewed hot punch, and every comforting composition, in endless variety, to make her better, and by way of inducing her to take them, she partook of a *quantum sufficit* of each beverage herself, bating the gruel ; but, alas ! alas ! Mrs Wildgoose's hot drinks could not cure Margaret Inglis's aching heart. She humanely invited company to amuse her.

She had Mr Fork, a clerk of the Life Insurance, to his tea, and Mr Gollochar, a hatter on the South Bridge, to his supper, and Miss MacGeggins, a singer in the Catholic chapel, to give them music,

and Mr Sprot, a ringer of the musical bells, to sing a second ; and Captain Stark, late of the Perthshire militia, now proprietor of a coal-depot in the suburbs, came in by accident, and as he was an amateur musician himself, he made up the concert ; and all the company were delighted except poor Margaret, whom nothing could delight that was either said or done to please, and the guests bothered Mrs Wildgoose for a party—a regular invited party, a shine, as they termed it ; and the day was forthwith fixed upon, and the present company invited, and also desired by their hostess to bring their friends, and she herself promised to have this and the other rare spirit to meet them. Accordingly next day were issued cards, and verbal messages innumerable, and cards and verbal messages for two successive days came pouring in in return. And Mrs Wildgoose was overwhelmed with business which knew no intermission, from the day of invitation till the grand day of entertainment came ; she had the viands to prepare, and the liquors to select and order, and her own dress to arrange, which was no small matter ; and every thing went on prosperously. Nothing was forgotten, and nothing went wrong. One little mistake occurred between Mrs Wildgoose and a silk mercer, but that was not worth mentioning. It did not spoil the party. The silk-mercier got the better of it, and so did Mrs Wildgoose. The dress of that lady required, as has been said above, to be arranged for the occasion. She did not contemplate purchasing a complete new dress, but metamorphosing some of her old ones. Sights of things were ordered in great varieties from different traders, viz. pieces of silk to match the gown intended to be made up,

pieces of satin for trimming to correspond, parcels of gloves and stockings, boxes of ribbons, and boxes of artificial flowers.

It is singular enough that none of all the things sent to Mrs Wildgoose from the different shops would suit. The silks were no match neither in colour nor in texture, the gloves were not of a right size, and the stockings were of a wrong quality, the flowers and the ribbons were not French, and, consequently, would not do. So all were returned, with an ample apology for the trouble, delivered down from Mrs Wildgoose on the top of the stair, to her servant on the middle flight, and from the servant on the middle flight to the shop-boy, who stood in the lobby to receive back the goods; and this ample apology for the trouble which had been given was accompanied by an intimation that the lady was to call herself at the shop the first time she was out, and there have a better choice. Now, though this message was delivered several different times to various persons, there is good reason to know that the lady never paid the promised visit to the different dealers, but one of the dealers favoured her with a call himself, to make a slight inquiry about a couple of yards of rich black satin, which had been taken off the piece, and a sprig of pink geranium, which had disappeared out of the box; and if all the dealers had been as acute as this one, each of them might have added many little items.

Mrs Wildgoose would have been out or in bed, if she had known the silk-mercier was to call, but she was taken by surprise. The gentleman was ushered into the parlour. He had a little bill of charges in his hand. The lady protested she never had received

the goods ; the gentleman protested that so and so were sent out of his shop, and that so and so only were returned to him.

The lady suggested that the matter rested with the shopman, who brought them, and not with her ; and she looked while she spoke, as the devil might be supposed to look if accused of having neglected an opportunity of ruining a soul,—a hideous picture of injured innocence. The gentleman asserted his shopman's integrity, the lady asserted her own, with sundry invocations regarding death and future rewards and punishments, if she were not guiltless. The silk-mercator shook his head, sighed and looked sorrowful. He was a good man ; Alas ! he thought all that his shop contained was not worth these few words of sin. He knew it was a case he could make nothing of, but might bring himself into expense and trouble. He took his leave, remarking as he went, " I fear, I fear, those trifles have been very dearly purchased."

The day of entertainment arrived. Margaret would fain have kept her own room, but Mrs Wildgoose would not hear of it, as she said the company had been invited expressly for her amusement ; and she pressed upon her some of her lackered ornaments and mock blondes to bedeck herself, and she insisted on the necessity of her getting a new dress body, or of cutting round the bosom of her best gown, that she might have a bare neck ; but on these points Margaret was inexorable.

She had not forgotten the rules and precepts regarding propriety in dress, taught her by Lady Grace, whose taste in that respect was faultless ; and this was a point of imitation in which the old lady was

followed to the letter by her grand-daughter, who was as remarkable for her superiority of style and appearance as she had been herself. A bombazeen dress up to the throat, with a mourning frill, fastened by a small brooch of jet, was, in spite of Mrs Wildgoose's remonstrances at the unsuitableness, all her adornment; and to say that she shone peerless amid the plebeian group that surrounded her, with their naked shoulder blades staring up, and their bare bosoms, would be to say nothing at all, for she would have borne the palm among even the most distinguished assemblage of rank and beauty.

The ladies of the party, with a very thin sprinkling of gentlemen, arrived at seven to tea and coffee; and Mrs Wildgoose introduced, in an especial manner, to all and each of them, "her particular friend from the country, Miss Inglis of Ingliston, daughter of the late Sir Norman Inglis;" and Margaret had to go through the ceremony of shaking hands with the whole of the guests, male and female.

There were the Miss Shorts, and the Miss Blythes, the Miss Brocks, and the Miss Brownlees, four families of sisters, consisting of three each; and their brothers were expected, when they shut their shops or left their counting-rooms. There was Miss Meek, Miss Bow, and Miss Bendy, Miss Gowanlock, and Miss Clinkscapes, Miss Cogle, and Miss Bogle, and twenty other misses, to whom the reader can have no desire to be introduced. And of the gentlemen who liked a good pennyworth of what was going, and had come in for a share of the tea-drinking, there was Captain Stark, the coal-agent, Mr Sprot, the ringer of the music-bells, and Mr Burns, the sub-

collector of government assessments, Mr Drew, the dentist, Mr Ballantyne, a student of divinity, Mr Piper, an accountant's clerk, an inmate of the house, who lodged in one of Mrs Wildgoose's attics, Lieutenant Darling, a lean elderly gentleman, with a nose in full blossom, who lived upon his money, and Mr MacIntosh, a solicitor before the Supreme Court. And this is but a trifling fraction of the living mass which squeezed into Mrs Wildgoose's public rooms, between the hours of nine and eleven.

The guests amused themselves in various ways between tea and supper. The younger and more agile part of the company danced up stairs in the drawing-room to Miss Cogle's music, till they were like to drop down themselves, and to break down the ceiling of the room beneath ; and in a little space left in a corner, stood a card-table, where Mrs Wildgoose and Captain Stark, Mr MacIntosh and Miss Meek, contended for victory at a game which should have been whist, but in condescension to Miss Meek's capacity, was only catch-the-ten.

During these agreeable proceedings above stairs, the lieutenant, and the sub-collector of the king's taxes, and the ringer of the music-bells, were settling the affairs of the nation in a parlour below, over a tumbler of rum and whisky punch ; while the clerk of the attic, the student of divinity, the dentist, and a few other kindred spirits who had joined their company, also in the parlour, together with a bevy of young girls, who liked other fun better than dancing, played at fortune-telling, conversation-cards, and forfeits, which latter were redeemed by many ingenious and novel inventions, besides the long kiss

in the corner, and the spelling of opportunity behind the door.

In the course of time, it became necessary to desist from all these harmless sports, to-wit, when the performers were tired of them, and when the piano strings were starting, and its notes rendered dumb by Miss Cogle's indefatigable thumping, and the company both above and below rendered deaf with the noise of the dancers, and the dancers' throats dry and sore with the dust they had raised from the carpet, for Mrs Wildgoose had had the floor-cloth taken off, but in the pride of her heart left on to be seen her Brussels carpet, which she had bought at a Lord of Session's roup, and which, by candle-light, passed for being fresh out of the loom, and by daylight might have passed for the same, if it had not been a little bare at the door, and at the windows, and near the hearthrug, and a little more bare where the deceased lord's table, with his draft-boards, used to stand; and these partial symptoms of tear and wear were on this festive occasion rendered much more obvious and general, so that the dancers with the dry and sore throats, and the Brussels carpet, were mutual sufferers, and must have parted with mutual sympathy and consent when the supper hour arrived; and the card-players, being by that time perfectly enfeebled by their mental exertions, simultaneously threw down their newly dealt hands, and straightway headed the procession which descended to the refreshment-room.

CHAPTER XXII.

" Sic hirdum, dirdum, and sic din."

There was in Mrs Wildgoose's supper-room a long table covered with refreshments of every sort. Every thing, in short, in or out of season, that ever was set upon a supper-table. There were dishes cold and hot, dishes costly and common, in such variety and abundance as would suit every taste and would satisfy every hungry appetite. And another table of smaller dimensions was set out on equally liberal principles, with liquors malt and spirituous, with a few decanters of foreign and home-made wines, which, like the Brussels carpet, were more for show than service, and a host of hot water jugs and toddy ladles, and the whole contents of a crystal shop of tumblers and glasses.

It was not intended, and the company did not attempt it, that they should sit round the table, but they sat as they could, and how they could, two to a chair all over the room, thick and throng, with each a plate on his or her knee ; and the first heat of carving, and helping, and stuffing was over before it was observed that one of the party was amissing.

Mrs Wildgoose had fancied all along that Miss Inglis was among the dancers. The dancers fancied she was among the forfeit-players or the punch-drinkers, and had given themselves no concern. The players at forfeits and the punch-drinkers had thought nothing at all about the matter. But she had been among none of them, for on the move being made after tea, when the company separated into

different groups, each seeking their own amusement, Margaret had slipped away unobserved to her own room, and there she sat in the dark, actually crying with vexation.

Her hostess found her out, and she hastily dried her tears and tried to appear unconcerned, and she was dragged down to the room below, and there was a general shout of joy when she made her appearance. Captain Stark clapped her heartily on the shoulder, and, with a familiar wink, asked her if she had been taking a *snooze*? The solicitor before the supreme court helped her to a chair; and the lieutenant with the blooming nose gave her arm a gentle pinch in passing, and proposed a bumper to her restoration as queen of the company.

"Hip, hip, hip, hurra! hurra!" roared all the men, starting on their feet and flourishing their glasses; and the din and roaring were like to rend the walls of the apartment, and Margaret sank down upon the seat which was set for her, pale as death, and stunned with the noise, and like to faint with terror and dismay.

"You must return thanks for that," cried Mr Burns, the gatherer of the window-light assessment and house-duty.

"You must make a speech," cried Mr Herdman, a tall, swarthy, strong-built man, with a loud voice, whose appearance very much suggested the idea of a huge quadruped on its hind legs. This was a gentleman who took a lead on the occasion, and was acting at one end of the table on which were the bottles and glasses, as master of the ceremonies over a jug of punch-royal, and he was also at times the buffoon of the company.

"The queen deposes you to make a speech for her," cried Mr Drew the dentist.

"Does your majesty depute me?" roared Mr Herdman, who had much ado to make himself to be heard amid the confusion of tongues. "Does your majesty depute me?" vociferated he a second time, while Margaret sat speechless and shaking, with a glass of hot negus which the solicitor had put into her hand.

"Yes, yes, don't you hear? Yes," cried the lieutenant. "Don't you know, man, that silence is consent?"

And without more ado, Mr Herdman rose up and began his speech forthwith.

"By the permission and special commission," said he, "of her most religious and gracious majesty queen Margaret——" Here a boisterous peal of laughter from all the company, with clapping of hands, broke in upon Mr Herdman's oration.

"I am hereby," roared he, in a voice which got above the other din, "I am hereby deputed, appointed, and commanded to notify and propound to you her liege and loving subjects, her majesty's most gracious will and pleasure regarding—regarding—that is to say concerning—concerning—I say——"

"You're off your eggs now," cried Lieutenant Darling, swilling off a glass of toddy.

"—Concerning," continued the speechifier, looking fiercely indignant at the lieutenant, but nothing daunted by the interruption; "concerning, I say, the late most gratifying testification of your loyalty and attachment to your sovereign. And her most gracious majesty's will and pleasure is——"

"Hear, hear," cried Mr Gollochar the hatter.

"Hear, hear," responded Captain Stark.

"—And it is the will and pleasure of her most gracious majesty——" proceeded the orator.

"Out with it at once, man," cried Lieutenant Darling. "We are all wearying for her majesty's will and pleasure."

"Call to order," cried Mr Herdman in a tremendous voice. "I can't get on with so many interruptions."

"Order," screamed Mrs Wildgoose, in a shrill key.

"Order," roared Gollochar, with an accompanying slap upon the table with the palm of his hand, which made all the glasses jingle, and the Miss Brocks, and the Miss Blythes, and the Miss Shorts giggled in full chorus.

"Order, ladies, I say," vociferated Mr Herdman.

"Nay, it is order, gentlemen, I think," bawled Mrs Wildgoose.

"Your majesty must assert your authority here," interposed Mr MacIntosh, relieving Margaret from the glass of untasted liquor, which he saw was only an annoyance and encumbrance to her. "I fear," continued he, "you have chosen an unskilful commissioner."

"She may easily appoint another," said Gollochar to MacIntosh. "What do you say to accept of the office yourself? You are a capital hand at a speech."

"Hear, hear! Mr Deputy MacIntosh's speech," shouted the sub-collector of the taxes.

"Mr Deputy MacIntosh's speech," echoed Mr Piper of the attic.

"Mr Deputy MacIntosh's speech," shouted all the company.

But an interruption was put to the business by

the announcement of a new guest, namely Bailie Liddel of the Canongate, who came puffing and blowing from a committee-meeting, which had detained him till a late hour.

"What a walk I have had, or rather race!" said the Bailie, wiping, with his silk handkerchief, the drops of perspiration from off his brow and face.

"What will you take, Bailie?" said the mistress of the ceremonies in her sweetest tone.

"I can be at no loss here among such a variety," replied the Bailie, casting his eye across the long table, still amply furnished with eatables, and then glancing along the other table, which offered a no less promising spectacle in the drinking department. "But," continued the magistrate of the Canongate, "I think a thimbleful of a raw dram first will be the best thing to keep off the cold." And, accordingly, the gentleman helped himself to a thimbleful, *i.e.* a thistleful of brandy, and afterwards to a draught of porter; for he was hoarse with his oratory at the meeting he had just left, and he pronounced speaking to be "drouthy work;" and he proceeded to stay his stomach with a slice of the salt round, a leg of a turkey, a "tasting" of the lamb pie, some veal croquets, a few custards, and a couple of jellies. Afterwards, by way of amusement, he nibbled at a tart and a cheese-cake or two, and then entered upon the occupation deliberately of mixing a rummer of hot punch, to keep all these ingredients in good agreement in his stomach. And, while he was engaged in the consuming of this potation, Miss MacGeggins of the Catholic chapel, and the other musical geniuses of the party, were preparing to sing; and each in succession, and sometimes two or more

at a time, squalled to the audience, till Lieutenant Darling, who abominated music himself, referred it to the company if it were not true that too much of any thing was good for nothing?

"I agree with you," said Bailie Liddel, stirring in his tumbler a fresh supply of whisky and water. "It is like Deacon Dowie's speech at the meeting about the choking up of the sivers and the overflowing of the gutters, which had to be cut short, sir, without ceremony, or we would have been nailed to the spot listening to him all night."

In the mean time, Mr Herdman had disappeared, and, by way of varying the amusement, explored his way, we do not curiously inquire how, to Mrs Wildgoose's sanctum in the upper regions. Whether he went with or without a guide, we cannot precisely tell; but he returned in a short time as a personation of the lady of the mansion, dressed in her crimson chintz gown, her mantle of grass-green gros-de-Naples lined with rose pink, her purple velvet bonnet and feather, with blond lappets, and all proper appliances, and a solitary bunch of brown, dried up, frizzled hair stuck out upon the middle of his brow, like the curled locks on a bull's forehead. Tall as Mrs Wildgoose was herself, her habiliments did not reach below the middle of the leg of this gigantic masquerader. His dark complexion, however, was on a par with the lady's olive visage.

"I am most happy to have the pleasure of seeing you in my house on this occasion, and hope soon to have another opportunity of having you all to partake of my hospitality," said Mr Herdman, addressing the company in a soft, mimic tone, so perfectly resembling the voice of Mrs Wildgoose, that the

likeness was irresistible. The whole company were in a roar of laughter. The tears started from the eyes of Captain Stark and Bailie Liddel, while the huge female figure paraded about where it could find a footing, and complimented the guests all round, and made such antics and ludicrous movements, that peal succeeded peal of tremendous merriment; and the grotesque figure began to caper in a *pas seul* upon the floor, and the circle opened up to make room for its evolutions, and, to the infinite astonishment and delight of the beholders, it mounted up on the table where the liquors were, and footed it most nimbly among all the bottles, and glasses, and drinking apparatus, and committed not the slightest damage; then down he came with all the agility of a child, and recommenced his steps upon the carpet, and Gollochar came forward as a partner, and the two hooked their arms together, and reeled, and wheeled, and waltzed, and uttered alternately at intervals the most terrific and astounding yells; and some of the rest of the company, inspired by the example, got up upon their legs and joined in the dance, while the circle widened to give them room, and the lookers-on crowded near the walls, or mounted on chairs, to save their toes from being trod upon.

Music was not missed, for it could not have been heard amid the clamour, and the roaring, and the laughter.

They waltzed, and reeled, and wheeled about, tugging and dragging at one another, with such hearty good will, that cries of "Oh, dear!" "What do you mean?" "Mrs Wildgoose, will you settle Mr Fork?" "Mrs Wildgoose, will you speak to

Mr Gowanlock?" and a variety of such like exclamations and invocations, uttered by shrill female pipes, were heard above the other din.

The wreck and devastation of the ornamental, and some portion of the useful part of the ladies' dresses, fully justified their giving vent to those thrilling complaints. The Miss Blythes' wreaths of artificial roses were torn remorselessly from their heads, and trampled under foot. The Miss Brocks' greasy, filthy-scented ringlets met with the same unhappy fate, together with bracelets, handkerchiefs, and scarfs, and dirty, tattered, battered, damp gloves, without number. Miss Bendy's comb of polished horn was dashed to the ground. Miss Macgeggins's towering ornamental comb of pearl paste, with cruel gilt teeth, was driven into her skull, and while she was suffering from this inhuman infliction, which was the unnatural result of certain kind familiarities of Mr Gowanlock, Mr Herdman's gigantic form came sweeping past behind her like a man-of-war in a storm coming drive against the stern of a little brig, and carrying all away before it. And the ill-fated young lady had her gauze skirt and petticoat of glazed cotton torn from her waist, and the lacings of dirty corsets and partial glimpses of smutty under-garments, were thereby disclosed to the company, to their infinite entertainment and delight.

But while one half of the company were engaged in this riotous and destructive fun, the other half were sedately making the most of their time in more profitable pursuits. In other words, they were making hay while the sun shone. Some were stowing away some sly mouthfuls from the supper-board, to make up for any deficiencies in their prowess there

before. The lieutenant and the sub-collector were emptying the brandy bottles. The Bailie and the Captain were giving them aid and countenance in the work. The clerk, who slept in the attic, was kissing Miss Meek in a corner, and Mr MacIntosh, the solicitor, who had probably caught a glimpse of the private transaction, took the hint, and attempted to offer the same compliment to Miss Inglis, who repulsed him with such indignation, that, in starting back, he overset Miss Clinkscales, who was dancing with the dentist, and the roar, and the laughter, and the tumult that succeeded was tremendous. The young lady was set upon her feet again, but proved to be unable to stand.

"She is *ab agendo*," cried the sub-collector of the taxes, who was nearly *ab agendo* himself by this time.

"*Ab agendo*!" roared fifty voices at once.

"We shall have her put upon a retiring pension," cried Mr Short of the Exchequer.

"We shall have her life insured," exclaimed Mr Fork of the insurance-office. And another overwhelming burst of laughter, with clapping of hands, succeeded, and the tails of Gollochar's coat, while he was whirling about like a madman, brought the jugs and the glasses, and the toddy ladles, down in a clatter and a crash upon the floor, and a high shriek from Mrs Wildgoose accompanied the smash of the crystal. Suddenly a loud knocking with a stick at the room-door arrested the attention of the merry-makers, and the gentleman who was nearest the door opened to see what was the matter. And there was a woman servant with a kitchen lamp in her hand, holding parley with two policemen in the pas-

sage, who were insisting for admission into the room.

"What is all this disturbance about?" cried the nearest watchman, striking his baton on the door; "make less noise, or we shall have you all off to the police-office directly."

"Noise!" said Mrs Wildgoose in a mild tone of surprise, and coming out to the lobby to rectify matters; "you must be in a mistake; there was no noise here, I can assure you."

"None, I can assure you," mimicked Herdman in the same gentle voice, shewing himself at the door in his gros-de-Naples cloak and velvet bonnet, and crouching low to hide the legs of his pantaloons, and to make himself appear a reasonable height for a woman. "None, I can assure you," repeated he still more gently; "and if you don't believe *me*, there is a clergyman and a magistrate in the company who can settle the matter."

"I care not, mistress," said the watchman, addressing Herdman, whose figure filled up the doorway, and prevented him from seeing into the room. "I care not, mistress, though you had all the clergy in the city, and the Lord Provost, and the town-council to boot, we must do our duty."

"Aye, it's a truth, mistress, and no lie. We must do our duty," bawled the other watchman, who was nearer the entrance-door, in a strong Irish accent; "and there's the dacent gentleman next house that you've kept destitute of sleep this whole blessed night, and he is looking over the window in his night-cap, cursing like a dragoon for us not doing our duty without laving it to him to tell us."

"Oh, that Admiral Duff! What a troublesome

man!" said Mrs Wildgoose in a whining tone, meant to deprecate the vengeance of the two policemen, while, during the whole parley, the company within were all hushed to perfect silence.

"Oh, what a troublesome, unreasonable man that Admiral is!" asseverated Herdman in his assumed feminine voice, which sounded still more pitiful and broken-hearted than that of Mrs Wildgoose, and he still kept his station in the door-way, completely intercepting any view into the interior of the room, and echoing every sentiment that the hostess uttered.

"A most unreasonable man!" reiterated Mrs Wildgoose most pathetically. "He really might hurt the character of *my* house. But I'll write him a letter."

"Yes, a letter must be written to him," responded Herdman sympathetically.

"And I'll ask him what he means," said Mrs Wildgoose.

"Demand what he means," said Herdman in a determined treble pitch, accompanying this decision with a bending of the knees, as if making a solemn confirmatory curtesy.

"Unreasonable man," resumed Mrs Wildgoose; "unreasonable man that he is, to think that I dare not have a few young people at tea, but he finds fault."

"Tea!" echoed the first watchman scornfully; "it is nearer breakfast hours than tea hours, I suspect."

"Aye, that's a truth," interposed the Irishman at the outer door; "but the lady's friends are maybe like me, they may have no set times for their victuals, but meat and drink never comes wrong to them at any hour."

"I am sure you would be welcome to a glass of something this cold night," said Mrs Wildgoose in the most obliging voice, and giving a signal to her maid to bring a bottle.

"Why, we feel none of the cold," replied the first watchman ungraciously, and turning his back upon the lady, "although," continued he, "we have had less to warm us than you have had, but we dare not taste your stuff, or we might lose our post before day-light."

"That we might," confirmed the Irishman, "for the Superintendent might come round himself (and what would hinder him) and poke his very nose into our mouths, and if we had but tasted a quarter of a tea-spoonful, we should pay a dear price for it, mistress."

"Oh, dear me!" ejaculated Mrs Wildgoose, shocked at such inhuman restraints.

"Dear, dear-a me!" reverberated Herdman with a sigh, which was almost a groan.

"You are two honest, excellent men, and that is what I'll always say," said Mrs Wildgoose, taking the lamp out of her servant's hand, and raising it aloft beside the gauze battery upon her own head, to shew the two honest, excellent men the way out, if they were so disposed. And after a few more complimentary, conciliatory, and most gracious sentences invented by Mrs Wildgoose, and responded to by Herdman, she got them fairly outside the street door.

Forthwith the company quietly dispersed, at least all who were able to take their departure, but Miss Clinkscales was not of that number, and she was obliged to share Mrs Wildgoose's dormitory. And

the Sub-collector of his Majesty's taxes, who had laid himself at full length on the hair-cloth sofa, and had sunk into a state of profound repose, was allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of his berth till he had slept off the fumes of the liquor. A few more were stowed away in corners about the room, as fate decreed ; one lay beneath the side-board with his head into a bread basket, which served both for night-cap and pillow, and another reclined transversely to him with his feet in the overturned plate-warmer ; and the ringer of the music-bells, who had looked deplorably speechless on this humbling sight, and had walked majestically away to shew his disapprobation, got no farther than the rope bass in the passage, and there he fell down, and lay like a clod ; but the indefatigable snoring which for the rest of the night enlivened the stillness of the lobby and stair-case, was a satisfactory proof that he was still in life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ — Lust, and pride, and dark ambition's dreams,
And hopes which make eternity a lie.”

R. MONTGOMERY.

Miss Inglis retired to her apartment shocked and terrified beyond measure. She went not to bed, but collected all the articles of her wardrobe, and packed them up. She counted over the silver in her purse, which was little more than would carry her back to Glasgow, and which she had always reserved in case of any emergency, and she determined not to remain another day under the roof. Surely,

thought she, Mr Bland is either deceived in the character of the woman under whose care he has placed me, or he has some vile design to deceive and betray. And so strongly was this impressed upon her mind, that she waited with the utmost anxiety and restless impatience till the hour should arrive when she might carry her resolution into effect.

She came down to breakfast at the usual hour, but the room was not ready. The servant was cleaning and clearing away. Miss Inglis returned again to her own apartment till she was called down about an hour after. Mrs Wildgoose was seated at the tea board, haggard and dejected looking, and as ugly as sin. Margaret Inglis scarcely spoke, and impatiently waited till breakfast was over, that she might intimate her intentions of leaving the house that very day.

"You surely are joking," said Mrs Wildgoose incredulously, and like one determined not to be put into bad humour. "Mr Bland said you might be here long enough, and he was to be back to town last night. You surely could not do any thing without consulting him."

"Mr Bland has no business with my movements," said Margaret indignantly. And when Mrs Wildgoose saw that she was in earnest, she came to high words, and told her she might go where she pleased, but to remember that she detained her trunks for payment of her board and lodging. Margaret did not anticipate this, and she was almost driven frantic at the idea of what might befall her. She was already poor and destitute; but to be deprived of her clothes, her only property, and set adrift a naked, friendless beggar, was an appalling thought!

The emergency made her desperately courageous, and she defied Mrs Wildgoose to her face, and told her, if there was redress to be found in Edinburgh, she would have it.

Mrs Wildgoose was calm, and only smiled at the impotence of her threats.

Margaret demanded where Mr Bland lived, and said she would go to him and expose her conduct.

Mrs Wildgoose gave her no information, but left the room, saying, she never argued, or attempted to reason, with any one in a passion. But Mrs Wildgoose was terrified to incur Mr Bland's displeasure, by allowing her to leave the house, and she went to put her servants on the watch to prevent her from going out.

Margaret hastened up stairs, put on her bonnet, and came down again, and entering Mr Bland's principal business-chamber, descended by a narrow private stair to the office below, where the clerk who had brought her to the house, and who was apparently a very respectable young man, was seated at his desk. She inquired at him when he expected Mr Bland to be there.

"He will not be here to-day," replied the clerk, "nor perhaps for a day or two, for he has caught a cold with his journey yesterday."

"And pray," said Margaret earnestly, "would you be kind enough to accompany me to where he lives, for I must see him directly, as I mean to leave town immediately?"

The young man looked surprised, and expressed his concern that it was entirely out of his power to accompany her at present, as he was extending a

memorial of some length, which must be ready by a certain hour.

"Then will you tell me," said Margaret, "in what part of the town he lives, and I will try and find it out myself?"

The clerk very civilly wrote down Mr Bland's address, and described to her as distinctly as he could what road to take, and told her, when she was at a loss, to ask the porters she would see at the corners of the streets, and they would point out the way. Margaret in her haste and eagerness hurried out of the office by the door which led to the area, and mounting the area stair, was out upon the street before she was missed by Mrs Wildgoose, who could not have foreseen this.

One of the servants was dispatched after her to entreat her to come back. But Margaret was resolute in refusing to return, and posted on in the direction the young man had indicated, and after passing along various streets, and making inquiries at several porters, she arrived at Mr Bland's residence.

It was a large handsome house in a new street at the west end of the town. She gave the bell a violent pull, and she heard it sound loud enough to alarm the whole establishment.

It was answered in a moment, and she asked with such an air of consequence for Mr Bland, and looked so full of dignified importance, that the man ushered her into his master's presence without hesitation.

"Is this *you*, Miss Inglis?" said Mr Bland, who felt both surprise and consternation at the unex-

pected intrusion ; and he rose and stood erect, while not a muscle of his face moved, for he felt at a loss at the moment whether to express displeasure, or to gloss over his chagrin at the visit with his usual affability ; and he continued standing with his lips compressed, as if determined to remain silent till he heard what she had to say. Margaret, although intent upon her errand, noted particularly his deportment, and it did not fail to strike her as an unaccountable reverse of manner from the respectful address, the gracious smile, and the extended hand with which he used to greet her. And she drew herself up in the same erect attitude, and looked him full in the face with eyes whose expression was not unmixed with anger, and the colour rose high in her cheeks, while, with all the eloquence and animation of excited feelings, she told him of the base, demoralising, hateful society to which she was exposed in his friend's house, and announced her determination of quitting it that very day.

" I am sorry, extremely sorry," stuttered Mr Bland. " But there must be some misunderstanding, some mistake," and his voice gathered courage as he spoke, and his features relaxed, and he begged her to sit down, while he resumed his own seat, and uttered a parenthetical sentence or two about his having been in the country, and having caught a cold, which gave him time to make up his mind what to say on the subject.

" I am sorry, Miss Inglis,—but, pray, sit down."

Margaret, however, disregarded the invitation, and continued to stand.

" I am sorry, indeed," proceeded Mr Bland seriously, " that there must be some misapprehension

on your part, or I must be most egregiously deceived. You said just now that Mrs Wildgoose was like a person of bad character, which, by the way, is, to say the least of it, rather an imprudent way of speaking; and, as a friend, I put you on your guard against expressing yourself so. You might bring yourself into trouble by it. Consider, you implicate more than one person in such a charge. And, is it reasonable,—I appeal to your own judgment and notion of things, although you have mixed little with the world, indeed, far too little; I wish to goodness you were placed in the sphere you ought to occupy: but we will talk of that again,—I appeal to your own judgment, as I said before, is it reason or common sense,—set every thing else out of the question,—that I should have my business-chambers in any improper place, and expose my apprentices and clerks, and, moreover, bring disrepute upon myself, by countenancing any but a person of the utmost integrity? The thing is preposterous. My business would take flight in a day's time were such a thing possible, or even surmised. Who of my clients would come to such a house? By all that's sacred, if I thought such a thing barely supposable, I would remove this very day. Indeed, a proper detestation of every thing like immorality, independent of self-interest, would compel me to such a step."

Mr Bland's position was undeniable. Margaret was calmed down by the argument, or rather by the high tone of integrity with which it was uttered, and she began to think perhaps she had been too rash. But there were facts staring with conviction to which she could not blind herself, and she ventured to argue with him. Ignorant as she confessed herself

to be, she said she could not think it usual for respectable society to be so riotous as to require the police to interfere.

"As to that," said Mr Bland, "they are so strict,—and it is perfectly proper that they should be so,—they are so strict, that if I were to toss that nose-gay out at my window on the pavement,"—and, as he spoke, he turned over with the tip of his little finger a half withered bunch of exotics which lay on the table before him,—“I should directly have a police-officer at my elbow, with a summons for my misdemeanour.” And he smiled, and turned up a lip of scorn while he spoke, attempting to pass it off as a thing of nought; but, in his own mind, he was secretly cursing Mrs Wildgoose for her conduct, and vowing in his heart that she should smart for it. But to clear himself in the mean time was his object.

"No doubt," continued he, "Mrs Wildgoose may be a little partial to dress and gaiety, as every person of her complexion is, and one of *your* quiet temperament cannot be so easily reconciled to it. But really Miss Inglis," added he, assuming a high tone, and rising from his seat, "were it not to yourself, I could not have condescended to enter into this explanation. But I restrain the displeasure which I should otherwise have felt had any one, under other circumstances, made use of the expressions which you have unguardedly used on this occasion. But I feel for you: yes, I deeply feel, and both appreciate and respect *your* feelings, when they are within proper bounds. Really, upon my word, this circumstance has greatly annoyed me, but your youth and inexperience are an excuse. But," pursued he, glancing at a time-piece, which stood above

the fire-place, "we must defer this discussion to another time. I have an appointment with a gentleman, who is to meet me here about this hour."

"I shall not encroach any further upon your time," replied Margaret, highly offended at this hint to go away; "but if this be all the redress I am to have, there shall be no other opportunity of discussing the subject given by me; and all that I want is to get my luggage removed from that woman's house."

"And, pray, where do you intend to remove to?" inquired Mr Bland, calmly. "Have you any other lodging in view?"

"No," said Margaret; "I mean to return this day, this very hour to Glasgow, and I only want an order from your hand to get my trunks along with me, which that woman threatens to detain."

"I really do not understand you," said Mr Bland, somewhat perplexed, and glancing round again at the time-piece, and comparing it with his watch, which he held in his hand; "I cannot interfere in these matters, at least at present, I really have not time. Indeed, I never interfere in women's quarrels; and it is particularly painful for me to be annoyed just now."

Margaret was, by this time, boiling with indignation, and she could not restrain herself, when she saw he took so lightly what was to her a real and serious grievance.

"If you cannot, or will not interfere just now," cried she, while the blood mounted to her face, which had been pale and red by turns, during the conference, "I will find redress elsewhere, if I should make myself odious in the attempt. I declare that, before I leave this house, I shall publish the matter

to your wife, your children, and your servants ; and if there be a magistrate within the city that can dispense justice, there surely will be protection found for an orphan and a stranger, who has been cruelly and wickedly deceived."

" Pray, madam," said Mr Bland, on whose brow was gathering a tremendous storm, " what authorizes you to shew off these high airs ? Is it because I have befriended you almost beyond the rules of common prudence, and, certainly, far beyond the usual friendship of the world, that I am to be thus defied and insulted to my face, and in my own house, as if I had done you wrong ? By Heaven ! there never was a woman dared to talk to me in the manner you have done ; but do not think, because a nobleman, in the days of his boyhood, made love to you, and possibly won your girlish affections, that it gives you license to enact so lofty a character as you would fain assume ?"

Margaret was now unnerved. He had found out, as it were, where lay her strength, and she suddenly became enfeebled. Her face turned like clay, her lips trembled, she gasped for breath, and sunk down upon the chair, which she had before scorned to take.

" Pray, take none of your hysterics here. I am not used to those exhibitions, and am not prepared for them," said Mr Bland, who almost repented having touched on the theme, when he saw the effect it had by the unnatural hue which had come over her countenance ; and he was terrified for a scene, and he pronounced these words more to rouse her than out of harshness, or to aggravate her distress.

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Margaret, with a strong effort, rallied and rose from her seat.

"Do not be afraid," said she, in a tone of voice as perfectly altered as her countenance was from what it had been a few moments before; "do not be afraid; I shall never trouble you more. If you ever meant me any kindness, I thank you for it; but if you meant otherwise, God forgive you."

These last words were scarcely audible, and she hurried out of the room, while Mr Bland attempted to detain her, by calling her back, but she disregarded him, and closed the room-door upon him; and whatever her design might be in thus hastening away, he had not power to follow her; and he heard the entrance-door shut, and he moved towards the window, and he saw her youthful and noble figure, bent with early care and disappointment, passing by along the pavement, and his eye followed her till she was out of his sight.

Mr Bland was for a moment unhinged. He turned from the window, and paced about his room, and he uttered mentally the direst imprecations upon the woman to whose charge he had committed her. Oh, how he gnashed with his teeth, and audibly cursed her, when he thought how unskilfully she had managed, and he vowed and wished for eternal vengeance upon her head.

Destitute and miserable as poor Margaret Inglis was when she left his house, enviable were the wretched feelings of her desolate but innocent mind in comparison of his.

A perfect whirlpool of wrath was boiling in his bosom, mingled with the dread that his good name, the good name in which he hugged himself, might

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be blasted, and yet his lust baffled after all. His rage and indignation, swelling at the guiltless object of his desire, burst out against the hateful woman who was accessory to his wickedness. The strugglings of the guilty passion was hell itself to *him*, a hopeless gulf into which he had recklessly tossed himself. *His* was the eye and the heart of the adulterer,—it is of no use to soften the appellation. Men who abet crimes call them by gentle names; but let sinners and their sins be called by the names which God will give them in his judgment at the last day.

Mr Bland was the husband of a virtuous wife, and the father of a family. He was a member of the visible church; nay, more, he was one of its ordained servants, and he bore the vessels of the sanctuary in his hands. He was looked up to and respected in his worldly calling, and the cause of the widow and the fatherless was committed to him for justice, and accounted safe; in a word, he was highly esteemed and honourable in the sight of men, but abominable in the sight of God.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“————— God Almighty!
There is some sort of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out.”

SHAKSPEARE.

In the course of the morning, several persons, as usual, called upon Mr Bland on business. The distraction of mind which he betrayed was all laid to the score of his indisposition; till at length he was unable longer to bear the state of suspense to which

he was driven. The day was pretty far advanced before his visitors left him at leisure. The scene in the early part of the forenoon was still before his eyes more vividly than ever, and that alone engrossed his whole thoughts. He could not settle to anything, nor could he face his family. He sent them word that urgent business compelled him to go out, and desired them not to wait dinner for him. He determined to go in pursuit of Margaret. He made up his mind to wile her, if possible, into some more quiet retreat than the house of Mrs Wildgoose. Keeping her there was a dangerous experiment for his own reputation.

The credulity with which she had all along listened to him, and her ready acquiescence in his proposal of her coming to Edinburgh, led him to think lightly of her principles. But subsequent intercourse shewed her to be a very different person from what he had at first imagined, and convinced him that it would require more skill than he had anticipated to effect his purposes.

While he had cautiously guarded against awakening her suspicions as to the motives of his attentions to her, he hoped, as he had too successfully done with his serpent tongue, on former occasions, that he might gain upon her affections and win her confidence, and so entangle her in a reciprocal attachment, that *his* guilty secret would at length become *her* guilty secret also.

A homeless girl, in such straits and difficulties, if he once could possess himself of her confidence and regard, would not, he thought, refuse a competence, even on dishonourable terms. And more than that, he was aware that he could do as much for her as he

had said. He knew his influence with Sir Archibald Inglis, whom he could, with very little persuasion, have got to settle an annuity upon her, payable through him. And he had already broached the subject to Sir Archibald, while he was in the fulness of hope that she was in his power.

This was the view of the case which this able practitioner took from the beginning; but his regard to his own good name, and the appearances he must keep up in the eyes of the world, obliged him to walk warily, and prevented him from prosecuting his designs with that haste which, in the words of Inspiration, is said to characterise the wicked.

Mr Bland ordered a hackney coach, and drove to his writing-chambers. He inquired for the landlady: she came to him all flurried and dismayed. He demanded where her guest was? She said she was out: she had gone out after breakfast, and had not yet returned. She then entered upon a vindication of herself, and explained every thing in her own way, and then contradicted herself in her statements.

Mr Bland got into a rage,—an open, violent, ungovernable rage. He cursed, he threatened, he vilified her. Mrs Wildgoose quailed beneath his ire, and was humbled to the dust. She knew well that she owed every thing to Mr Bland's patronage, and that her credit and her means would be gone if he took serious offence. She quaked, and trembled, and tried to clear herself with a hundred lies: she said she had been all over the town searching for her. Mr Bland commanded her to go again and find her out, or never shew face more. Mrs Wildgoose

hurried on her hat and shawl and went out, but was totally at a loss whither to go : Miss Inglis, she was aware, had no haunts to which she might resort. She, therefore, all disordered as she was in her dress, and still more disordered in her manner, hurried along the streets, and down to the coach-office at the Black Bull, and from thence to all the other coach-offices. The clerks at the different places looked their books : no such name as that for which Mrs Wildgoose inquired was entered, and they could give her no information. The unhappy woman knew not how she was again to encounter Mr Bland. She, in utter desperation, had recourse a second time to the clerks of the general coach-office, and applied to the porters who were seated on the benches about the doors. She whined to them in a tone of despair, and told them her calamity,—a piteous tale about a young friend of hers from the country, who must have lost herself about the town. The clerks and porters sympathised, but could give her no intelligence.

Mrs Wildgoose whined still more piteously, and the clerks winked to one another.

"Had your friend ony luggage?" inquired a Highland porter, who would fain have afforded consolation.

"None," said Mrs Wildgoose, in a tone of deeper despair. "Her luggage is all safe in my house."

"Och, then, it couldna be her at all," said the porter; "for I handed up a bit green pented kist and a bandbox to a black woman like yoursel', that went away on the tap o' the coach at four."

The porter's remark cooled Mrs Wildgoose's in-

quiries: she left the office abruptly. Home she must go; she had no alternative. Mr Bland she must face sooner or later.

Meantime, Mr Bland waited in dreadful anxiety. Mrs Wildgoose had made up her mind, on her way home, to meet him with a lie. She told him she had ascertained at the office that Margaret had gone off to Glasgow by the afternoon coach. She thought this would be more soothing intelligence to Mr Bland than a tale of uncertainty, as it would appear he could easily find her out there. But, when she found that his anger knew no bounds at this communication, she drew in her words, and denied the assertion. A dispute ensued,—high words, abuse, imprecations, cursing. It occasioned a breach between the two, which never was rightly cemented again.

Mr Bland, after this, longed for a pretext for shifting his writing-chambers; and he soon found an opportunity. And, whatever reason he might have given to his landlady for taking this step, he established by it his own good name in the eyes of the world,—his virtuous detestation of every thing like impropriety. For he gave out, as the ostensible reason for removing his office and withdrawing his countenance from Mrs Wildgoose, that he had discovered that she kept late hours and unruly company. His hypocritical malice had the desired effect. Her apparent respectability was gone by his desertion of her, and she speedily sunk into difficulties and obscure poverty. And whatever she, in her revenge and resentment, might say to injure Mr Bland's character and extenuate herself, went for nothing. If any of the reports which she circulated among the off-scourings of society, with which, in

her destitution, she was driven to hold intercourse, ever by any accident reached the ears of the respectable classes of the community, they were spurned as idle tales,—the malicious inventions of wicked people. Thus is the world deceived, and thus men are allowed to lull themselves in the security of their good name. But to return to Margaret Inglis.

She had left Mr Bland's house confounded at the allusion he had made to her romantic attachment to young Weirham ; and how he had come to the knowledge of it was to her altogether unaccountable. But the circumstance made an entire revolution in her feelings ; for, when she entered the house of Mr Bland, it was with the utmost eagerness to save her wardrobe, the sole property she possessed, and which, when threatened with the loss of it, she valued the more. But, when she departed from Mr Bland's in the abrupt manner above described, the whole world, had it been in her possession, would have seemed as nothing to her. Desolation, hopelessness, absolute nothingness was impressed on every thing. Death would have been desirable,—annihilation, any thing that would have hidden her from every one and from herself ; and she moved along the streets scarcely conscious where she was going, and certainly without any plan in contemplation. She was suddenly roused from her reverie by a driver calling out to her from a coach-box and pulling up his horses, and she, starting back, saw that the pole of the carriage was at her very shoulder. The sudden fright at being thus nearly rode over, recalled her to consciousness, and, worthless as existence had appeared, she was still actuated by the principle of self-preservation ; and she pursued her route with

increased activity, and with some attention to what was passing around her. She was determined never to return to the house of Mrs Wildgoose. It had, from the first, appeared to her neither a place of respectability nor safety, and she had a presentiment that, if she did return, some great evil would befall her.

She hastened to the Black Bull. The Glasgow mail had set off some time before she arrived. She inquired if there was any other Glasgow coach that day? and was informed there was one in the afternoon at four. As she could not sit in a public coach-office or walk about the streets till that hour, she made up her mind, on the instant, to walk out upon the Glasgow road, and wait till the coach passed by; and she thought she might, when out of town, rest in some cottage by the wayside.

She set out upon her journey. She was an excellent pedestrian: miles of a lonely country road did not daunt her, and, when she was once out into the open country, she felt herself safe; and, as her distance from the city increased, all her apprehensions of danger melted away. She went on, resting by the way as she proposed, till she was eleven miles out of town, when she waited till the coach came up. There was no room inside; she mounted on the top, and, about ten o'clock at night, she arrived at Mrs Buchanan's door.

She found her friend, Mrs Buchanan, confined to bed with a severe illness. The house, as all houses are where there are sickness and poverty, was lonely and desolate. The old lady kept no servant, but was attended by a poor aged widow, a native of Lancashire, who used to come in occasionally for a small pittance to wash, and assist in cleaning the

house. When Margaret arrived, this old person opened the door, and informed her, with unaffected concern, that Mrs Buchanan had been so ill, that her life was despaired of, and she was still in so precarious a state, that it might be of serious consequences to disturb her so late in the evening. Margaret, therefore, without seeing her, retired to her accustomed chamber, all comfortless as it then was, from being out of use. She was thankful that at least she was in a place of safety, but she spent the night in weeping, and in melancholy forebodings, that her destiny was decreed to be a dark one.

CHAPTER XXV.

“Deus providebit.”

The fatigue of body which Margaret Inglis had undergone, the anxiety of mind which she endured, and the hopelessness of her situation, could not fail to affect her constitution, healthful and strong as she was naturally. She had also caught a severe cold from her exposure to the weather on the top of the coach, without any suitable defence.

On the following morning she was feverish and ill, and unable to leave her bed, and she continued in that state for several days, during which time she was unable to think of what was past, still less to devise any plan for the future.

When she was somewhat recovered, her spirits were so dejected, that she felt as if unfit to make any exertion.

Mrs Spiers had gone to reside permanently at

Rothsay for her health. Lizzy had accompanied her, and was soon after married and settled in that neighbourhood, and never returned to reside in Glasgow, so that Margaret was left, amid the vast concourse of that city, without an acquaintance or friend, except Mrs Buchanan, and she was not likely to have her long.

Moneyless, friendless, and dispirited, the few months which followed formed perhaps the most miserable period of her existence. Unable to exert herself, and conscious that she must be a burden upon her hostess, her situation was perhaps as pitiable as could well be imagined.

Her visit to Edinburgh was a passage in her history of which she began to be ashamed, and she never liked to allude to it. Mrs Buchanan's state of health, which rendered her unable for conversation, precluded her from telling her adventures to her when the subject was fresh in her mind, and afterwards Margaret became reserved on the subject.

The only thing which almost reconciled her to the loss of her clothes, was her natural love of independence, for she well knew that they would amply repay Mrs Wildgoose for all she had ever cost her. But there was amongst them many things which her young heart was loth to part with. There were some ornaments and valuable pieces of dress she had received from her grandmother, and which she never had had a fitting occasion to display. She vainly thought, when Mr Bland prevailed on her to go to Edinburgh, that she should be introduced into such society as would require her to use them. But, alas! she had suffered dearly for this delusion.

Her books—a small, but valuable collection,

chiefly presents from Mr Gowans, were all that she had saved. These, partly on account of being heavy of carriage, and partly to oblige her friend, Mrs Buchanan, who was fond of reading, she had left behind in Glasgow. She wished from her heart now, with all the bitterness of past experience, that she had left her other things in such safe keeping. But regrets were unavailing.

After enduring much vexation at her loss, the house was disturbed one night at a late hour by a loud knocking at the door; and to her infinite surprise it was a porter from the Edinburgh coach-office bearing the packages she had left in the house of Mrs Wildgoose. Her heart did feel a sensation of joy at the unexpected sight, but it was accompanied by a miserable feeling of mortification, when, after the porter threatened to take them away again as she had not wherewith to pay the carriage, she had to send the old woman who attended Mrs Buchanan in all directions among the neighbours to muster a loan of as much money as would satisfy the demand.

But Mrs Wildgoose had not obeyed the peremptory order of Mr Bland, to send the clothes back, directed to Mrs Buchanan's care, which he commanded to be done from fear of being brought into trouble, if inquiry were made about them by the owner, without first abstracting every article of value which the boxes contained. Some gorgeous pieces of lace, a diamond brooch, and pair of earrings, were gone. Alas! alas! poor Margaret wept at this discovery. It seemed her fate to be robbed of every thing upon which her heart was set.

There was none to whom she could communicate

her trials. Mrs Buchanan was evidently in a dying state.

Margaret was distant in her manners, and she never entered into familiar conversation with the old English widow, who had lived for some time constantly in the house. This old woman, poor and mean as she was, had also her own pride, and she kept aloof from Margaret, determined not to intrude till she should condescend to be on friendly terms with her.

But Margaret's destitution was not complete till her friend and humble benefactress, Mrs Buchanan died.

Would to Heaven she had died with her, was the uppermost feeling of her heart, and she could not forbear in a despairing tone to express that wish when she saw her friend's remains carried away to the grave. But Widow Kirke, the old woman alluded to, ventured in a reproving manner to admonish her of the sinfulness of such impatient expressions.

"If you knew what I have suffered," said Margaret, finding relief in tears, "you would excuse me."

"I know what you suffer," rejoined Widow Kirke calmly, "although none ever told me. But I read it in the anguish of your face, and in that melancholy eye. I know, indeed, your life is one of continual suffering, but perhaps God sees that you require it all."

"I have not, I can assure you, I have not deserved it," said Margaret bitterly. "I am not a guilty creature; you injure me, you greatly injure me, if you think I am."

"My dear young lady," said Mrs Kirke respectfully; "you misunderstand me. I have the very highest opinion of you, and it grieves me to the soul that I have not the means, as I have the heart and will, to befriend you as you deserve. But perhaps a better day is coming both for you and for me, for mine has been a life of suffering as well as yours. I have had a long pilgrimage of sorrow. I am seventy-two years of age. I was born to plenty, but all that I ever had took wings and flew away. I am the last of my kindred. I have buried five sons, three of whom were laid together in the grave in one day; and I have buried an only daughter, who was in the bloom of youth, and lovely as you are; and I am now here a sojourner in a strange land, friendless, and far from my native place. Many are the days I have never broken my fast. Many are the nights I have never shut my eyes from cold and discomfort, and still I am in the land of the living, and the place of hope; and if it even should be so to the end of my days, I do not repine nor despair. Heaven will seem sweeter after all this toil is over, and I thank God that a song of praise has often been in my mouth when my heart and flesh were failing me for want, and I knew not where to look to for a morsel to sustain life."

Margaret's only answer to the widow's discourse consisted in tears, and these flowed freely. But Widow Kirke wept not. Her days of weeping seemed to be over, and with a peaceful smile on her countenance, she tried to soothe Margaret, and notwithstanding her sordid apparel, and poverty-stricken appearance, there was something almost dignified in

her demeanour, and in the serene submission depicted in her features.

Mrs Buchanan's effects were sold to pay her rent and funeral expenses, and some other small debts which had been contracted in her last illness. Margaret remained with Mrs Kirke in the house till the day of the sale, but where she was to seek for shelter after that, she knew not. She lingered about in the house while the sale was going on, and she wandered from one empty apartment to another, as the company who were assembled moved from the different rooms. She was almost distracted at the thoughts of her own helplessness. Widow Kirke had offered her the shelter of her humble roof, but she hesitated about accepting it, as she could not remunerate her; but, as the day passed on, and there was no prospect but to be cast into the streets, or perhaps remain, by the landlord's favour, within the walls of the empty house, she bethought herself of these alternatives, and she accepted of the widow's offer, determining, in her own mind, to work for her subsistence as she had done before.

While she was musing on these things, she was startled by a person touching her familiarly on the shoulder; and, on turning round, a countenance well known to her met her view, but so altered, that she would scarcely have recognised it. It was Mrs Logan. But her bloom and vivacity were gone; there was care, and discontent, and unhappiness in her now sallow, withered face. She shook hands heartily with Miss Inglis, in whose breast the meeting stirred up a thousand painful associations; and Margaret, without uttering a word, burst into tears, while

she still continued to press the hand of her old acquaintance.

"Still a weeping beauty, I see," said Mrs Logan, attempting a faint smile. "I could scarcely have recognised you," continued she, "you are so pale and thin. But I knew your back. There, said I in my own mind, goes Lady Grace *the second*, when I saw you cross the passage from the other room; and I followed, for I was certain it was you."

Queries and explanations followed. Margaret's tale was soon told; and Mrs Logan,—now Mrs de Lancy,—informed her, that she had been married for some time to Colonel Gilbert's attendant, and that they kept lodgings in the town for commercial travellers.

Where Margaret's destination for the present was to be, was a question very naturally asked; and, as Margaret gave a very indistinct and unsatisfactory reply, an invitation to the house of Mrs De Lancy followed.

But Margaret had learned something by experience. She remembered that she and Mrs De Lancy never were of congenial sentiments. Destitute, therefore, as she felt herself, she resolutely declined a lodging in her house, and the utmost she agreed to was to call upon her next day to hear all the news.

Mrs De Lancy having already purchased what she wanted at the sale, went away. It was soon all over, and the company gradually dispersed. Finally, when the house was cleared, the doors were locked; and, as the shadows of evening fell, Mrs Kirke took Miss Inglis's packages, and, assisted by her in carrying them, conducted her to her humble,

nay, miserable, dwelling, in a narrow, dirty passage in the meanest and most obscure part of the town. Margaret's heart almost failed her at sight of the place, and, for a moment, she repented not having accepted Mrs De Lancy's offer, as she groped her way into Widow Kirke's low, wretched hovel; and, after stumbling, when she gained the interior, on the uneven earthen floor, she stood for a time in total darkness, till her hostess went out to a neighbour in quest of a light. The light which was brought disclosed the miseries of Mrs Kirke's residence. It consisted of an outer and of an inner apartment, both of small dimensions. The two were divided by a thin partition. The outer room, which had no window, served for a kitchen, as was seen by the few wretched articles of kitchen furniture. The empty grate had been without fire since the commencement of Mrs Buchanan's illness. The damp air of the place was intolerable. The roof, black with smoke, and the mouldy walls, was an appalling spectacle to one like Margaret, who had been accustomed to the magnificent apartments of her father's house; and when Mrs Kirke shewed her into the inner chamber, the prospect was not improved. Nay, this inner room into which Margaret, with a sinking heart, carried her things,—while Mrs Kirke busied herself in collecting some pieces of fuel to make a fire,—was, if possible, more comfortless-looking than the other, except that it was floored with wood. It had no fire-place, but there was a small, misshapen window in a corner high up near the roof, like a slit in a prison. The plaster, in many places, was peeled off the walls, and streams of wind came rushing through between the bare

laths. The furniture consisted of two uncurtained low pallets or truckle beds, two broken stuffed chairs, with the horse-hair stuffing staring out in front, and a large hair trunk that, like the chairs, had seen better days.

Gratitude to the old woman who had offered her the shelter of her roof, when she had no other refuge, and respect for her feelings, made Margaret restrain herself. She took off her bonnet and returned to the outer place, and sat down amid the clouds of thick suffocating smoke, which the damp fuel and the newly kindled fire sent forth, and she sat in silent endurance, while the widow put things in order, and went out to make a small purchase, and bring a jar of water from a well in the passage.

"What would you like to have for supper, ma'am?" said the widow on her return, gently stirring up the coals, which were beginning to burn.

"Nothing, nothing," replied Margaret, scarcely able to articulate the words. But Mrs Kirke remarked "that she could not go to bed without something, and she hoped she would partake with her of what she was going to prepare for herself." Margaret attempted no reply, while the widow proceeded to make some oat-meal gruel on the scarcely kindled fire, which imparted no heat, and which would not, with all her exertions, bring the mess to the boiling point. She covered her small table with a clean mangled old damask napkin, very much the worse of wear, which she had some difficulty of searching up, from the bottom of the large trunk in the interior apartment; and she dished in two bowls, the raw, smoked gruel, seasoned with salt instead of sugar, for which she apo-

logized, as she had no sugar in the house ; and she placed the table close to where her young guest sat, and then seating herself opposite to her, she raised her hands, and pronounced, with slow solemnity, the following address to Heaven.

“ Almighty Father, give unto us hearts full of gratitude to receive this, and all other blessings of thy Providence, of which we are most unworthy ; and do thou, in thy mercy, preserve us thy servants from the love of life, the fears of death, and the terrors of judgment. Amen.”

The solemn conclusion of the petition impressed Margaret's heart, and she felt reverence and respect for the being who uttered it. She partook in silence of the repast, for which, unpalatable as it was, she had more appetite than she anticipated, and she retired to her humble couch of straw, which had a very insufficient covering to defend her from the cold. The widow occupied the other bed. Margaret expected no sleep, but sleep came uninvited, and the night passed away in sweeter and more pleasant slumbers than she had enjoyed for many months.

Some sweet reminiscences of dear Ingliston passed through her fancy in her sleeping hours ; but when she awoke, the illusion had fled. She looked round the walls of her apartment, and remembered her misery.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Le temps, qui change tout, change aussi nos humeurs."

BOILEAU.

"—— Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain."

THOMSON.

In the course of the forenoon, Miss Inglis fulfilled her promise of calling on Mrs De Lancy. She found her and her husband apparently in a thriving way, occupying a large house, which they reported was always well filled with strangers; and Margaret was detained to partake with them of a small, smoking joint, which was served up for their dinner, at two o'clock, in their own private parlour. Margaret repeated her visit from time to time, and was always hospitably received; but, although her principal object in visiting Mrs De Lancy, was the hopes of getting some employment through her, she found upon further experience, that although Mrs De Lancy undertook to do a great deal, and to speak to a great many people, all her promises came to nothing. Mrs De Lancy's manner was more desultory than it used to be. She seemed subject to variable moods. Margaret found her sometimes in good humour, sometimes in bad, sometimes talkative, and in high spirits, and at other times intolerably sullen. Her curiosity about the affairs of others seemed blunted. She asked few questions, and Margaret found no difficulty in concealing from her the place of her abode, and the mean circumstances in which she lived.

On farther intercourse, Margaret began to suspect that an evil habit had crept upon her, which

was by degrees deadening the energies of her mind, as well as ruining her health. The withered look, and the sallow complexion, might possibly have been mistaken as arising from other causes, but the unsettled and sometimes dull eye indicated the true cause, and the continually tainted breath heralded her vice of habitual intemperance. Women who walk the streets in rags and wretchedness, and who, in substitution for the comforts and necessities of life which they cannot obtain, swallow, to satisfy the cravings of nature, a portion of that which will stupefy their senses, and shorten their days, may be excused. But those women who are at ease—who have all the comforts of life around them—whatever be their situation or grade in society, cannot hope for this lenity, if they abuse their blessings, debase their minds, and brutify their faculties.

It is a common saying, that “a man may be cured of drunkenness, but a woman never.” Let females therefore beware of that incurable and unpardonable vice, lest they incur that guilt which God by his Word declares will exclude them from the kingdom of Heaven.

Margaret soon found there was not much to be expected from Mrs De Lancy’s friendship, and her visits became very few. Mrs De Lancy had promised to procure her some work from her lodgers, and Margaret, in hopes of this, repeated her calls, but at last it seemed to her that she was following a mere delusion, and she was almost resolving that the visit she was then making should be her final one, when Mr De Lancy, who was a pleasant, good-natured, happy man, who thought this world a very excellent one, and a very desirable place of resi-

dence, brought in to tea a teller of the Royal Bank, who lodged in his house. Mrs De Lancy introduced this stranger to Miss Inglis. The stranger was very agreeable, and after detailing a great deal of public news, condescended upon some domestic matters, concerning himself, which he addressed to Mrs De Lancy, who was in excellent spirits. And the tendency of the teller's conversation to Mrs De Lancy was to remind her of what he had told her before, that his wardrobe was in a very deficient state, and that she must really be kind enough to look it over and supply its defects ; and he said, perhaps she might know some sedate old matron who would give her assistance ; and while the teller made this remark, which, in his politeness, he meant to be as far as possible from appearing to be applicable to any one of the present company, his eye glanced towards Miss Inglis, whom he in reality meant ; for, some time before, Mrs De Lancy, in a pathetic mood, had given him a touching account of her difficulties, but the poverty and sorrow which he saw in her countenance tended more than all his landlady's description to awaken his sympathy. Mrs De Lancy, with equal politeness, forbearing to allude to her sensitive young guest, promised to attend to what the gentleman wished, and he rose and went out to return to his banking office. In the course of half an hour, a web of fine linen came from a draper, with the teller's handwriting in pencil on the wrapper, saying that Mrs De Lancy was to get this made into shirts without delay. Mrs De Lancy complained that her eyes were weak, and that she could not see to shape fine work, and the web was consigned to Margaret's care, who, with it and

a pattern shirt under her shawl, took her sad way homewards to Mrs Kirke's, with feelings of melancholy thankfulness. She had to burn a candle at mid-day in Mrs Kirke's dingy dwelling, in order that she might be able to execute this order, and with persevering industry she laboured to complete the task.

A few months passed away in this manner, during which time she had employment from the same quarter; but this could not last always, neither could her frame endure the privations which she suffered. The very effort she was making to gain a pittance was undermining her health. The poor morsel that she shared from day to day with her humble friend, was earned in the bitter despondency of a heart that was breaking, and she was laid for a time on the bed of sickness. But she rose again to comparative health and strength, and another summer and another winter passed away. None had ever come to inquire for her in her sickness, and none there was to congratulate her on her recovery, when she was able once more to go out into the fresh air; nor was there a house whose hospitable threshold was open to receive or welcome her back again.

CHAPTER XXVII.

" Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long."

One Sunday, when Margaret Inglis was on her way home from church, after morning service, in turning the corner of — Street, she was accosted by a stout full-faced gentleman.

"How do you do, Miss? I hope you are very well," said the stranger, in a half foreign, half English accent, and accompanying the salutation with a very polite *congé*. Margaret looked up in surprise. So very few people ever claimed acquaintance with her that a slight trepidation seized upon her, and her heart fluttered.

"Ah! Miss, you forget me," remarked the stranger.

"Oh, no, I do not forget you," replied Margaret, recognising Mr De Lancy; "I hope you are well, and how is Mrs De Lancy?"

"Quite well, Miss.—No, not very well, I should say; she has got the headache. But you never come to see us now. Do come over this morning. Mistress has a great deal of amusement for you. She has news about old acquaintances of yours. Do come and dine to-day."

"I thank you," rejoined Margaret, "for your kind invitation, but I cannot accept of it at present, I am expected at home. But what news of any acquaintance of mine?" added she, while a train of sad and painful associations crowded into her imagination.

"Oh, nothing, nothing but good news," rejoined De Lancy, who, from the sadness of her countenance, thought she anticipated some distressing intelligence; "nothing but good news, grand wedding puffed off in the London papers; we read it there. But Mistress could tell you better; she heard all the dresses described by Mrs Campbell of Westerfield's maid, who saw them. Miss Campbell was one of the bride's-maids."

"But," said Margaret, making a feeble attempt at a smile, "you have not told me who the bride is.

Is she any person that I know ?" Alas ! she could not say, Is she a friend of mine ? for she had none.

" You ought to know her if you do not," replied De Lancy, looking quite pleased and merry with giving this information ; " the lady is a cousin of yours, a blood relation, Miss Hay Inglis ; but she is not called of Ingliston in the papers, but of some place in England, I forget what, but she bought it with her own money, for she is very rich you know, and she is Lady Weirham now. She is married to young Lord Weirham. The title and the money will do well together ; the Weirhams are all poor, very poor," and Monsieur De Lancy shook his head ; " but this will set the young nobleman on his feet, as you say. Do come and dine this day, and you will hear all my wife can tell about it."

" I cannot, I thank you," gasped out Margaret. " I must wish you good morning, sir."

" Good morning, Miss," replied De Lancy, lifting his hat, and then extending his hand to shake hands. " I am afraid you are not in good health, Miss," continued he, as he detained her hand for a few moments. " You are white, you used to have the fine rosy colour ; but bad air in this city hurts good complexions. Do honour us with a call one day this week : Mistress will be glad to see you, so will I. I wish you had a good marriage yourself, Miss ; none deserves it better. Adieu, adieu." And with these benevolent sentiments rapidly expressed, Mr De Lancy hastened away, bowing very low as he took his leave.

There is a stage in human suffering which, when once arrived at, any thing can be endured. Margaret thought she had arrived at that point ; but still

there had remained a lingering feeling of disallowed hope ; now that was crushed for ever.

After receiving the intelligence which had just been communicated to her, she could not, at that moment, think of returning to Mrs Kirke's till she had composed herself. She lingered for a few moments in the street, and then she silently retraced her steps to the place of public worship. The celebrated Dr —, from Edinburgh, was to preach that afternoon, on behalf of some local schools. The people were crowding in, long before the usual time, and Margaret was obliged to take a seat where she could find it, without encroaching on the regular sitters. She retired into the furthest back pew, where common people sat, where she was soon hid from observation by the crowd that thronged in on all sides, and she rested, with some degree of satisfaction, feeling that there she and all her concerns were entirely hid from human scrutiny. " Would to God," prayed she, as she reclined her brow upon her hand, " would to God that this weary head were laid to rest. Would to God, that this aching heart were still and motionless in the grave ; but, Oh, my God, if thy designs concerning me are not as yet accomplished, give me patience to wait thy appointed time."

The breathings of her sad devotions had just reached this more resigned tone, when the minister, who had ascended the pulpit unnoticed by her, gave out the following verses of the 96th Psalm :—

" Great honour is before his face,
And majesty divine ;
Strength is within his holy place,
And there doth beauty shine.

" Give ye the glory to the Lord,
That to his name is due ;
Come ye into his courts, and bring
An offering with you.

" In beauty of his holiness,
O do the Lord adore ;
Likewise let all the earth throughout
Tremble his face before."

The praises of God raise up the heart, even when it is sunk and crushed under the severest inflictions from his hand, and none but those who have experienced the holy comfort and joy which words such as these impart, when ascending from the mingled voices of God's people, in the courts of the Lord's house here, to the Sanctuary above, can appreciate the feelings of Margaret's heart on the occasion. Her heart, which was as a dry desolate place over which frowned the tempests of the sky, sent forth as it were a well spring of joy, in holy response to the inspiring strains. There was doubtless in the large assemblage met that day to hear the preached word, many a sad and sorrowful heart, as well as that of Margaret Inglis ; and those sacred walls were as a covert from the storms of the world without, to those who sought shelter beneath the holy roof, where, by God's promise, his divine presence ever is in the midst of them who meet together in his blessed name. But others had their homes, their friends, their comforts, their counterbalancing joys, to soothe, ameliorate, and change the current of their griefs : but Margaret had none. Others were as hot-house plants, sheltered, and cherished, and guarded from the inclemency of the seasons ; she was as a late untimely autumn flower, which blooms in an evil day, and, not worth being gathered,

is forgotten and left to the blasts of heaven, to be blanched, and beaten upon by the early winter rains, which rush down in their desolating fury to lay waste the earth.

The sacred services of the day went forward. The preacher propounded the holytext, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints," and he opened up the meaning of the sublime intimation with such forcible and home-striking illustration that the ears of the audience tingled. A hush of deep, breathless silence pervaded the place. The preacher himself paused. There was at that moment, a low, melancholy, wailing groan, like the last effort of life, heard in a remote corner of the house.

The minister, who was occupied with the importance of his subject, heard it not. He had only paused a few moments to rally his strength; and on he poured afresh, a torrent of eloquence, more energetic and sublime than before; and the listening crowd, with eyes upturned to the speaker, drank in his words with a deeper intensity, and with more wondering admiration. But in a dim recess, from which had issued the faint groan, like that of death, there was visible a commotion among the crowd. Those who were not near enough to render assistance, were standing up and looking round in their pews, and whispering together, while there was carried out from the midst of them, by two men, a figure stiff and lifeless as a corpse, and a way was opened up among those who thronged the aisles and passages to allow it be borne out into the lobby.

"I doubt she is dead," said the beadle, unconcernedly, while he placed together two benches, and the men, apparently common tradesmen in their

Sunday suits, who had carried the person out, laid her straight upon them, and several anxious-looking women stood round, some with scent bottles, and some with peppermint lozenges in their hands, by way of restoratives. And the beadle hastened to the session-room, and brought a tumbler of water.

"Oh, is there not a doctor in the kirk?" cried a decent-looking woman in a black bonnet and red shawl.

"Plenty, I'se warrant," replied the beadle coolly; "but wha' can pick them out in sic a crush. We manna mak an alarm i' the time o' worship. I've seen mony ane as ill afore i' the hot weather. The young woman will come to in the course o' time."

"It's no very like she will," said one of the men who had carried her out, and who, raising her head, tried to force a mouthful of the cold water between her clenched teeth. "Lord preserve us," added he; "she is turning black about the mouth and eyes; cry for a doctor if ye should stop the minister in his preaching, and alarm the haill kirk."

But this summary order was scarcely uttered, when assistance was at hand. The anxious woman in the black bonnet and red shawl had worked her way through the press to the pew, where sat a young gentleman of small stature, and of a mild, intelligent countenance, whom she knew to be a medical student, and whispering something in his ear, she, at the same time, seized him by the lappel of the coat, and dragged him out with her through the crowd. Many of the audience who were standing in the passages thronged out after them to see what was the matter.

A confused murmur of suppressed voices ran

through among the people as they thronged into the lobby. Audible whispers of inquiry were heard on every hand. "Is there any thing wrong?" asked one. "Is there any body ill?" said a second. "Is there any thing the matter," inquired a third; and fifty more interrogations were made and responded to by as many answers contradictory and unsatisfactory.

The woman with the red shawl and black bonnet pushed her way till she reached to where the unfortunate person lay extended on the benches, and still she grasped tenaciously the coat of the young gentleman, till he disengaged himself from her hold, when he proceeded to feel the patient's pulse.

"Ah! this is serious," said he with a tone and look of concern; "has she any friends here? Let her be removed without loss of time. Where are her friends?"

The people looked at one another, but could give no information.

"She has nobody with her that I know of, for I sat next her in the seat," interposed one of the men who had helped to carry her out; "and she was sitting alone when I came in."

The young medical man promptly resorted to such restoratives as were in his power, but without success. It was his opinion that the fit would be of long continuance, and that such remedies would be required as could not be obtained or applied under present circumstances.

He again looked round with manifest uneasiness, and inquired if nobody knew to whom she belonged.

"I never saw her before," said one man. "She's no a reg'lar sitter here," said the beadle.

"I'm certain she's a lady," said the kind matron with the red shawl and black bonnet.

"Aye, but very sore reduced like," responded another female.

"Do you think she is dead, sir?" inquired a third, addressing her query to the young student; and anew at the sound of the word *dead* a confusion of suppressed voices was heard asking questions and answering them, and persons with eager curiosity were coming out from the body of the church, and pushing forward to get a sight of the person that caused the consternation.

"What is all this," said a fat portly gentleman, coming forward with a ladleful of copper, silver, and pound-notes in his hands. This was an elder who had been assisting in gathering the collection after sermon. He came out to see what it was.

"What is all this?" said he in a magisterial voice, for the congregation within were singing the last psalm, and it made it unnecessary for him to whisper for fear of being overheard.

"It is a person unwell, sir," said an elderly lady in a plaintive tone.

"It is a person in a fit," said several male voices, speaking together.

"It is a young woman dropped down dead," said another person, hazarding a bolder assertion.

"Dead! dear bless me!" exclaimed the portly gentleman, pushing forward among the throng with his ladleful of money. "Is there no medical assistance at hand?"

"Yes, sir," replied the young student, who was seated on the bench with the unfortunate patient's head raised up, and resting on his knee. "We

have done all we can. But, pray, let a coach be called, and let her be taken home. This is a dreadfully serious case."

"But nobody knows where her home is, or whom she belongs to," said a murmur of voices at once.

"Take her to the Infirmary," said the gentleman with the ladle. "I will give you a line whenever I get this money out of my hands. Run, Cairns," cried he to the beadle, "run for an Infirmary chair, and say I sent you; no, stop till I give you a line," and the portly gentleman, in whose person were combined the three responsible offices of elder of the church, magistrate of the city, and manager of the Royal Infirmary, proceeded to the vestry with his ladle, followed by Cairns. Meanwhile some of the females had been anxiously making investigation in the most delicate manner they could, to try and find out who she was, by any writing which might be in her pocket, or about her person.

The first thing they naturally thought of was to seek for her bible, and see if her name was there; but the bible had been thrown down on the floor in the confusion of bringing her out, and she wore no pockets, and in the little black reticule which dangled at her side, suspended by a ribbon twisted round her arm, there was nothing found but a handkerchief squeezed together in a little wet mass. But it had been drenched, not with tears, for the fountains of her eyes had been long sealed up, but drenched with expectoration. The woman with the red shawl opened up the handkerchief to examine for a name. It was of the finest transparent French cambric, but tender with age, and darned in many places; and in one corner were the initials G. I.,

with a coronet above, and the number twelve and the year 1783 below, all marked in the most delicately formed characters with fine hair silk.

While the women and the men were, with curiosity and wonder, examining this, the whole of the congregation came thronging out. The blessing had been pronounced, and all was over. New curiosity was excited, and new questions asked. The great bulk of the people, without knowing any thing was the matter, found their way out into the streets at the different outlets in front of the church, but a sufficient portion, constituting a suffocating crowd, remained behind in the lobby, all with eager looks and eager questions, pressing to get near to see the person reported to be lying dead on a form. At length the clergyman, who had remained unusually long in the pulpit, to allow the audience time to disperse, descended from his seat, and proceeding along the empty church, came out among the people. A hasty inquiry on his part, responded to by a brief answer, announced to him what had happened.

The concourse made way for him as he passed along, and then closed round him, as he made his way towards the spot where the sick or dead person lay.

"Mr Deighton!" exclaimed he, recognising the English student, who was busied about the female that lay lifeless.

"This is a sad affair," replied the student; "but we have sent for a chair to have her carried to the Infirmary."

"But are none of the lady's friends here?" said the clergyman, looking round benignantly. "How long has she been in this state?"

"More than half an hour," replied Mr Deighton ;
"and she has not shewn the least sign of consciousness."

"Gracious powers !" cried a tall, flustered-looking man with a high toned voice, forcing his way to the side of the clergyman. This is a dreadful business ; a young woman, too—quite young. Is she really gone ?"

"I trust not," said the clergyman, raising his eyes aloft, while the solemn expression of his countenance shewed that his heart was engaged in earnest supplication to the Hearer and Answerer of prayer.

"Heaven and earth !" ejaculated the tall gentleman, looking restlessly about, and pushing hither and thither among the crowd. "This is an appalling thing. I never saw the like of it in my life. Can nothing be done ? What is the use of all this crowd, and nothing doing ? Has the girl no friends here ? I say, whom, in the name of goodness, does she belong to ?"

"She is mine, she is mine," cried a tremulous female voice, while a little old woman, dressed in a short cloak of rusty black mode with some remnants of tattered lace hanging at it, and a velvet bonnet of the same rusty hue and ancient aspect, and of so small a size that one might wonder how a human head of full growth could be inserted into it, pushed her way through the assemblage, and, clasping the death-like form in her feeble, shaking arms, she exclaimed, "Oh, my beloved ! have you really gone to rest from your sufferings in God's own house ? and am I left in the world without you ?"

The appearance of the old woman and the pathetic tones of her voice caused a new sensation

among the bystanders. The clergyman was visibly affected.

"Bless me, is she no better yet?" cried the portly manager of the Royal Infirmary, squeezing through the crowd, with the other gentlemen at his back who had been appointed along with him to gather the collection, and who, together with him, had been engaged till now counting the money out of their ladders on the vestry table.

"Has the chair come?" inquired Mr Deighton.

"No, no, not yet. By-the-by, we must mind that," replied the manager and elder, who had forgot all about the chair while engrossed with counting the collection, and Cairns the beadle, who regarded that proceeding with even deeper interest than the collectors themselves, had lingered beside the gentlemen in the vestry to receive his perquisite, and had offered no hint to remind him.

"Where are you, Cairns?" cried the manager. "Run now for the Infirmary chair. I forgot to write the line, but it doesn't signify."

But Cairns was engaged in some distant corner, and did not hear the gentleman's command.

"Oh, doctor," continued the portly gentleman, extending his hand to the clergyman. "Many thanks, sir, for your admirable discourse,—magnificent discourse. Capital collection,—L.203, odds!"

But the clergyman's mind was absorbed in other reflections, and he made no reply.

"Do not take the trouble to send for an Infirmary chair, gentlemen," said the little old woman, looking round upon the crowd, while the tears trickled down her withered cheeks. "There is still life in

her ; and let her breathe her last, if it please God, under my humble roof." And Mrs Kirke wrung her hands while she spoke, and there were many tearful eyes besides her own in the company around.

"It is all a prejudice," said the elder and manager of the Infirmary. "She would be well taken care of."

"It may be so, sir," replied Mrs Kirke, "but this is no time to argue people out of their prejudices. Oh, if I could but get her conveyed home, she should never more be out of my sight."

"Is she your daughter?" inquired the clergyman.

"No, your reverence," answered Mrs Kirke, making an obeisance ; "I am now childless, but she has been better to me than ten daughters." And she wrung her hands, and wept again. "And oh," continued she, "I grieve that I let her out by herself this morning. She scarcely broke her fast before she went, and I waited long at the middle of the day for her to come in to her morsel of dinner ; but she never came."

The old woman, as she spoke, wept still more bitterly.

One of the bystanders offered to run for a street coach, and it was brought in a very short space.

Mr Deighton then raised Margaret up, and she began to breathe quickly ; but her eyes remained shut. He endeavoured to make her swallow a few drops of hartshorn mixed with water, and she stretched out both her hands as if feeling for some one. Widow Kirke took one hand, and the clergyman took the other.

"Are you better now, love?" inquired Widow

Kirke. Margaret gave no answer, but returned the pressure both of Mrs Kirke's hand and that of the minister.

"Praise the Lord," ejaculated the widow fervently raising her eyes.

The clergyman ejaculated the same in his heart, but uttered nothing.

"The coach is waiting at the door," cried the man who had obligingly run for it. And forthwith Mr Deighton and another gentleman prepared to carry out the invalid.

Now, the widow was considering in her own mind how she should agree with the driver about the payment of the coach hire,—for a few halfpence was all that she then had in the world,—when the tall, boisterous-looking gentleman with the loud voice, as if he knew her thoughts, thrust half-a-crown into her hand; and he made no secret of it, for he accompanied the donation with these remarks in his highest tone:—

"There, good woman, is half-a-crown for you to pay the coach-hire. No thanks. I am perfectly relieved to see the young woman coming round again."

"Oh," said the fat gentleman, with his forefinger and thumb inserted into his waistcoat pocket, "I was going to have given half-a-crown myself for that purpose; but, since you have done it,——"

And the fat gentleman's speech was a fragment.

"My goodness, my giving it is nothing to you, sir!" cried the tall gentleman, in a furiously angry voice. "Out with your half-crown, sir, or I shall say that humanity has taken wings and flown from the earth."

Accompanying this fine figure of speech with a flourish of the hand, the tall gentleman looked in his wrath as savage as if he could have eaten the other gentleman up; and the latter, for the honour of the threefold office which he held, fished up again the identical half-crown from his well-lined pocket, and put it into the widow's hand with more grace than is generally exhibited by corpulent persons, and he took the opportunity of assuring her that her friend would have been most comfortable in the Infirmary.

The crowd made way for Margaret to be carried out. The clergyman, before retiring to the vestry, shook hands with Widow Kirke, and bade her farewell with an accompanying benediction; and he left in her hand a substantial proof of his Christian benevolence. And another instance of true charity and of God's providential care was shewn before she left the place. A young lady, dressed in very deep mourning, came behind the widow as the people thronged out, and, unperceived by any one, slipped something into her hand, which she found, upon inspection, to be a guinea note; and, before Mrs Kirke could express her thanks, she had disappeared among the crowd.

Mr Deighton went in the coach along with Mrs Kirke and the patient. He was a young gentleman from England, prosecuting his medical studies under the superintendence of Dr Wardrobe, in whose house he boarded. Dr Wardrobe was at that time one of the most celebrated physicians in the town. His practice was entirely among the higher and more opulent classes of the community; and, although he was reputed to be a humane man in his

attentions to the poor, his virtues in that respect were seldom put to the test, for the poor would never have thought of calling him, and he was too much employed in other quarters to think of paying *them* voluntary domiciliary visits.

But his young friend and pupil Mr Deighton by his interest with him effected what it would otherwise have been difficult to accomplish. On the following morning, Dr Wardrobe's carriage was seen to stop at the head of Brodie's Entry, and two gentlemen, namely Dr Wardrobe and Mr Deighton, picked their steps down the dirty lane leading to Mrs Kirke's house. Margaret was in bed. The Doctor made a short visit, asked a few professional questions, looked abstracted whilst they were answering, prescribed some medicines, which he gave an order for the widow to obtain gratis, and went away.

Mr Deighton called back in the evening to learn the effect of the prescription. He said to Mrs Kirke that the Doctor had pronounced no opinion regarding the case, but that he was to call soon again. Dr Wardrobe did call, as the young gentleman had intimated, and continued his visits from time to time as long as Mr Deighton remained with him : but when he went away, his visits became very rare, and at length ceased altogether. The attentions of Mr Deighton himself were unremitting, and, during the remaining time of his stay in Glasgow, a transient gleam of humble prosperity seemed to enliven Mrs Kirke's dwelling.

But the time came when this, like other blessings, passed away ; for he left Scotland, and returned to his native place.

The rigours of a miserable winter for the poor succeeded. The harvest had failed, provisions were scarce and dear ; commerce was at a stand, manufacturers and mechanics were thrown idle : and there was nothing but an outcry of misery throughout the land.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Wronged poverty,
Sending his eyes to heaven.”

GILES FLETCHER.

“ I am hungry, very hungry,” said Margaret Inglis, stretching out her wasted arms to Widow Kirke, and looking piteously in her face from the pillow on which she had passed a sleepless night. “ But I am free from pain just now: is not that a blessing ?”

“ A great blessing, my dear,” replied Mrs Kirke, trying to hide the emotion which was rising within her at the miserable prospect ; for the morning was pretty far advanced, and they had not broken their fast, and there was nothing to look forward to but a day of entire abstinence, unless some unlooked-for mercy came in the way.

Widow Kirke sighed deeply, retired to the outer apartment, and sat down in the comfortless gloom, beside an almost fireless hearth ; and, folding her arms across her breast, remained in melancholy abstraction, while, from time to time, her lips moved in silent, ejaculatory prayer.

An hour had passed away, when she heard Margaret’s feeble voice calling to her from the inner

chamber, and, hastening to see what she wanted, she found her sitting up in bed.

"How are you now, my dear?" said Mrs Kirke, sitting down by her bed.

"Very well," replied Margaret; "better than I have been for some time. But it may not last long."

"But," interposed the widow, who, alas! had nothing more to offer than words of comfort, and grieved in her heart that she had not, "we must be thankful for present mercies."

"I know we must," replied Margaret. "I am thankful, very thankful, and I am not without hopes that I may yet be well enough to rise and make some exertion. And I wish I were so for *your* sake; for you have expended your all upon me, and I am unable to make you any return."

"Woe is me, my dear," rejoined Mrs Kirke, "I have expended nothing at all on you. Indeed, I have been better off and happier since you came than I was for many a long year before. I think a blessing has been in my house ever since you came to it. I am only grieved for your sake, my dear, that my lot has been such an humble one." And the tears overflowed the widow's eyes as she added, "But he who feeds the young ravens, will perhaps in mercy remember *us*."

Margaret's features had all the calmness of a chiselled statue. No sigh escaped her bosom, no tear glistened in her eye; but she put her hands within the folds of her nightgown, and, taking from her neck a black ribbon, she detached from it a small gold locket set with pearls, and placing it in the hands of Mrs Kirke, thus addressed her in a tone of perfect composure:—

"This is the only article of any value which I possess ; and why should I keep it ? I never thought to part with it for a morsel of bread ; but God's will be done. I part with it without a scruple. If I have loved it too well, I hope I can now say that there is nothing now on earth on which my heart is set. Here, take this, Mrs Kirke,—it is all that I possess,—and go and sell it. Sell it for whatever it will bring, and buy some bread."

Mrs Kirke took the trinket in her hand, but seemed to hesitate. She knew not its history, but she knew that it had been to Margaret as an article of idolatrous fondness. It was concealed in her bosom day and night, and, till that moment, Mrs Kirke never had it in her hand.

"Do go, dear Mrs Kirke," said Margaret, sinking down upon her pillow ; for she was exhausted with sitting up so long. "Do go," she repeated earnestly. "And now I have parted with all ; and I thank God who has placed me in such circumstances, that he has shewn me it is a duty : and I hope that he will displace every idol from my heart before I go down to the grave."

Margaret had scarcely done speaking, when a knock came to the door, and then the latch was lifted, and a very tawdry middle-aged woman, with a dirty cap on, and a torn gown of an undefinable hue, entered. She was merely a neighbour who had not much to do, and she had come to inquire for Mrs Kirke and Margaret. She was not otherwise than a tolerably civil, decent sort of a person, without any glaring moral defect in her character, and equally without any virtue excepting that of good-natured, easy obligingness in paying frequent and long visits

to her neighbours' houses, especially when they were sick, which her own idle habits at home made it a matter of expediency for herself to do, for she was often glad to steal out from the sordid poverty of her own wretched hovel when she had nothing to occupy herself with, and nothing to eat, and nothing to look to, to see how her fellow-citizens in equally destitute circumstances were getting on. Bad are the best, in general, whom the respectable and well principled poor, such as Widow Kirke, can select as associates in a low, mean, and wretched neighbourhood, and this she had found to her experience; but in *her* circumstances it was an evil without a remedy.

She kept herself much retired from her neighbours, making intimacies with none in whom there was so little congeniality of sentiment with herself, and she tolerated, rather than encouraged, Mrs Stalker's frequent visits, but upon occasions she was aware she had been very much obliged to her for sitting beside Margaret when she had to go out, for she could not leave her alone.

Mrs Stalker came very opportunely on the present occasion.

"How is a' wi' you the day?" inquired Mrs Stalker, shivering with cold, and casting a glance towards the grate, where three or four red cinders indicated the bare existence of a fire, and the sight suggested to her mind a philosophical principle of contentment, as she ruminated on the fact that Mrs Kirke's fire was not much better than her own, which had just gone black out before her face, and she brightened up with wonderful cheerfulness at the consideration. Had there been a hundredweight of coals blazing and roaring in Mrs Kirke's grate,

it would have been nothing to it in producing such a salutary effect on Mrs Stalker's mind and spirits.

"How do you do, Mrs Stalker?" said Mrs Kirke politely, and coming out to the kitchen.

"Thank ye, I canna compleen," replied Mrs Stalker; "I was wearyin' to hear how your friend was this morning. We've had a sair nicht o' snaw."

"Very," rejoined Mrs Kirke.

"This maun be a sair time for the *poor* fowk," remarked Mrs Stalker in a tone of voice, as if she herself had been one of the *rich*, and subject to no inconveniency from the trying times.

"Very sore, indeed, Mrs Stalker," responded Mrs Kirke.

"Eh! aye, sirs, it should mak fowk thankfu," rejoined Mrs Stalker, shivering again, and setting herself down as close as she conveniently could by the side of the three or four red cinders. "Eh! sirs, how it pondered in my mind a' nicht, when I heard the blast rumlin in our lum head, what wid they be sufferin' that were atween touns, or on the sea," added she in a moralizing strain.

"A very natural reflection," observed Mrs Kirke. "Yes, indeed, Mrs Stalker, there are many thousands worse off than we are; and what do you think of those who are not only destitute of the comforts of this life, but are also destitute of the consolations of God's grace."

"Indeed, Mrs Kirke," resumed Mrs Stalker, "it's a very ill look-out nae doubt, when a' that's put thegither. But really it should mak fowk thankfu' that's in a medium way."

Whether Mrs Stalker meant in a medium way in respect to temporal or spiritual comforts it is im-

possible to say, and she had probably no distinct definition of her meaning in her own mind. Certainly, if the observation referred to herself, her own temporal affairs were in any thing but a medium way, for they were on the very verge of wretchedness ; but, if she was thankful notwithstanding, it is to be hoped that her spiritual concerns were in a more hopeful state.

" But how has she been a' nicht ?" inquired Mrs Stalker, with reference to Margaret, but without giving her a name.

" But very so so," replied Mrs Kirke ; " she slept none, but she is not worse this morning. However, you had better step in to see her, and as I am going a message, perhaps you would be kind enough to sit with her till I come back."

" With thousands of pleasure I'll do that," said Mrs Stalker, rising with alacrity from the miserable comfort she was endeavouring to derive from the mockery of a fire, and stepping into the inner chamber ; and Mrs Kirke slipped out upon her errand.

" Ye're nae waur this mornin', I hear," was Mrs Stalker's salutation to the invalid, who lay white as an alabaster figure, with a spot of pink on each cheek. And Mrs Stalker, without more ado, took her station in the chair at the head of the bed.

" How are you to-day ?" inquired Margaret.

" Middlin', I thank ye," replied Mrs Stalker, " I daurna compleen ; but ye've hain a unrestfu' nicht, Mrs Kirke tells me."

" Very," said Margaret, " I could not sleep with the cold, and the pain too was very severe."

" The cauld, I think, was plenty without the pain. I never cam a heat, or got leave to blind an

e'e in my bed mysel'," remarked Mrs Stalker ; "but waes me, woman," added she, "I'm vext for ye. Has the doctor never said what he thinks is like the matter wi' ye?"

"Never," replied Margaret, "at least not to me."

"So ye dinna ken whether he thinks it's a fair decay, or some ither trouble?"

"No," answered Margaret.

"I question if he kens himsel'," rejoined the edifying attendant. "They're a wheen torn down rascals the doctors, a perfect intak on the public."

Margaret made no remark to this decision, but continued lying still and motionless, with her eyes half closed. Mrs Stalker made a short, but emphatic pause, after delivering this opinion regarding the medical faculty.

"So he hasna said, whether he thinks you'll get better?" was her next query.

"No," rejoined Margaret, "he said nothing about it."

"Aye, that's just like them," resumed Mrs Stalker ; "They keep a' their skeel to theirsels, and it's just the like o' you they learn upon ; but I'se warrant you, he'll hae his ain thought."

"No doubt, he has," rejoined Margaret.

"And maybe he has tell'd what he thinks to Mrs Kirke, though he has hadden his tongue to *you*."

"I daresay he may," answered Margaret ; "I never spoke to her about it. It would only distress her, and do no good ; but whatever his opinion may be, Mrs Stalker, it is best to be in readiness for death, and I am not afraid to die ;" and Margaret put her wasted hands gently together, and a soft sigh escaped her lips, which moved for a few seconds.

It was no sigh of sorrow at the melancholy subject, but merely a gentle breathing of secret prayer.

"Aweel," said Mrs Stalker, resting back in her chair; "it's a grand state to be in, an' real yedifyin' to hear ye say sae. But, wae's my heart, it's lamentable, after a', when ane thinks o' youth i' the full bloom as it were o' beauty, laid on a bed o' trouble. Dear me, when fowk's auld and frail, it's naething in a manner. But, tuts," added she, sitting forward, and looking in the sad, but beautiful, countenance of the invalid; "ye maun keep up a lichtsome heart. There's nae sayin', ye may come round yet. Oh, aye, the Lord's all-sufficient, and ye've a' the life in ye ever ye had, and ye've youth too on your side."

"It will all be well," said Margaret, "whatever way it is. I am willing to die, but I am equally willing to live, even though it should be a life of suffering."

"Na, na, a life o' sufferin' wad never do. Lord forbid," rejoined Mrs Stalker. "But I'm glad to hear ye say ye wad be wullin' for life if it ware sae ordered; it's but nat'ral, quite nat'ral. But hae ye heard o' that unco sudden death that's ta'en place this last week?"

Margaret said that she had not.

"Ou, I wonder ye haena heard it," continued Mrs Stalker, proceeding to give the particulars of the case. "The haill toun's been in a stushie about it, and the doctor's sair wytit for being sae delatory in comin', for ye see it was but a puir servant lass, and what did he care? She was serving wi' Mr Rough, the grocer up at the head o' Jamaica Street. She had a big washin' on the Monday, and extraordinar

heavy washins they have, they tell me, and very dirty claes, and she syndit them up on the Tuesday, and gaed to the Green, and she had scarce got the master's twa sarks puttin out, for he files twa i' the week, besides a ruffled ane on Sabbath, whan she was seized wi' a pain in her inside, and hame she cam, and the mistress maskit a penny-worth o' Epsom sauts, and made her swallow that. But instead o' growin' better, she aye grew the waur, and aff the laddie i' the shop was sent for the doctor. Tuts, quo' the doctor, it's naething ava. Let her tak a het drink, and gang till her bed, and I'll come at my ain leisure. When the laddie brought hame this word, the mistress ran an' put a full glass o' the best Hollands gin into a tumler, wi' a lock sugar and some boilin' water, and made her drink that on the tap o' the sauts, an' I houp the gin garr'd the sauts geal on the stomach, and the lass was a corp in six hours frae the time she was ta'en ill. Sae whan the doctor came at his ain time, and saw the puir young woman (she wasna ower four or five and twenty—muckle about your ain age, I daursay) in the agony o' death, he said it was clean murder to gie speerits o' ony kind aboon sauts, for its sure to garr them geal. But, I'll warrant he didna wyte himsel, and though he was sae careless o' her whan leevin', he could mak his ain o' her whan she was deid, for they say she wasna mony hours aneath the grund, when he had her up to mak a discoorse upon her trouble to his students."

The being to whom Mrs Stalker was addressing her discourse lay still and silent, more like a corpse than a living creature; and she offered no comment on what she heard. She who had suffered so much already, both in mind and body, was not likely to

be much affected by such disjointed talk as she was sometimes constrained to listen to.

"Speakin' o' thae students," pursued Mrs Stalker, "pits me in mind o' what took place at Airdrie no lang syne. The papers, they say, was just fou o't, and a reward was offered by the king for takin' up the students. But tak my word for't, they wad ne'er be ta'en up. They might just as weel try to catch the maister o' the ill pit, or cast saut upo' *his* tail, as to apprehend thae students. Sae if the king can fa' upon nae better plan for preservin' the land in peace, and proteckin' baith his deid and his leevin' subjects, he may e'en keep his rewards to himself."

"It seems," continued Mrs Stalker, "there was a young woman east at Airdrie that was lang in a dwin-in' way; she had some uncommon inward trouble that nane o' a' the doctors she consulted could foddom. Sae, to be sure, she dee'd, and the doctors wanted to open her to mak' theirsels sensible what had ailed her, but she had an auld faither, and he daured them to pit a hand upon her, and her mither was like to gang wud at the very mention o't, and her sister grat her een out at the thouchts o' sic a thing; and, to be sure, they buried her wi' a' decency, and spared nae expense according to their sma' means. But the students, sorrow b'on them, they are eneuch to be in a nation, warn a to let her alane for a' that. Sae at midnight they broucht a gig to the corner, at the back o' the kirk-yard dyke, meanin', according to their custom, to set the corp up i' the gig dressed like a grand leddy, wi' a feather, and a vail, and a straw bannet. But they were begunkit for ance i' their life, and they were cheap o'd. Do they no mistak the graft, and they gang to ane whaur a

young woman had been buried twa three weeks afore, that had dee'd o' the mortifee'd sma' pox, and they cut the truuff across the middle o' the graft, as they aye do when they lift the deid, and fauld's it back, an' howks down till they come nigh the coffin, then they struck in the thing they draw up the corp wi' at the head o' the coffin, and out they hauled the corp, and they harled aff the deid claise; but, lo! and behold they ware amaist knockit down, and they flang a' fae them an' ran; and when the beathral cam in i' the mornin', for it was Sabbath mornin', to ring the bell, what does he see but the corp lyin' half out ower the graft—a grousome spectacle, atweel—and he fand the mutch that had been on its heid lyin' in ae pairt o' the kirk-yard, and a cheque napkin in anither. The cheque napkin he gae afterhend to the minister's lass; it was ne'er a hair the waur after it was plottit. I kennae what cam o' the mutch. But, dear sirs, isna it a terrible thing that fowk canna get leave to lie aneath the grund for thae vagabonds?"

Margaret faintly acquiesced.

"They're sair to be pitied, atweel," continued Mrs Stalker, "that has nae body to look after them when death comes, and get them dacently interred. I'm sure gin ony thing were ailing *you*, it wad be an unco thing; you that has sic an uncommon trouble. But nae doubt you're no sae unthouchtfu', but it's gi'en ye meikle concern, I'se warrant, or this time, thinkin' what micht come ower ye."

"Never, never," said Margaret earnestly; "I must not think of that. I fear none of these things, I am in safe keeping," and she raised her eyes aloft, and a hectic flush came over her face, for natural

feeling was not yet extinguished in her mind, spiritualized and ethereal as it was now become; and a slight shuddering sensation at the evil which Mrs Stalker was conjuring up to her imagination thrilled through her frame, and she repeated earnestly, "I am in safe keeping, I must have no fear."

"I wish I were like you," said Mrs Stalker with tantalizing perseverance in pursuing the horrible subject. "But I hae kenn'd and heard sae muckle, I canna help bein' feared," and Mrs Stalker herself shuddered both with horror at her own recollections, and with cold.

"Tam Lowrie—him ye've heard me sae often speak about," continued she, "gie's me unco orations about the wye they do wi' the fowk that has to get coffins aff the toun;" and Mrs Stalker was proceeding with an appalling description of legs and arms, heads and hearts, and all the other members of the human body desecrated by the knife, and denied Christian burial, when Margaret, interrupting her, sighed heavily, and said, while the thin blood was seen to travel rapidly through her countenance, "Do not talk of that any more, Mrs Stalker; not that it frightens me, but I do not like it. All my concerns, both of soul and body, are in good hands, and I am not afraid. He that has shewn me so much mercy, and bestowed on me so many blessings, will surely prepare a place to receive my bones."

"Weel a weel, then," said Mrs Stalker. "It was a' to divert the time a wee that I spoke, but I'll crack o' any thing ye like." And Mrs Stalker dropped the horrible topic, and entering at once on a cheerful subject of her own choosing, gave an interesting detail of courtships and romantic adven-

tures, wherein the heroes were coal-carters, and the heroines young ladies of her acquaintance, who were no better than they should be.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“ The Justice,
In fair round belly, with good capon lined,
With eyes severe. * *
Full of wise saws and modern instances.”
AS YOU LIKE IT.

While Mrs Stalker was thus discoursing, Mrs Kirke made her way through the snow which blocked up the narrow streets and alleys, and as her commission to sell the trinket was one quite new to her, she directed her steps to a respectable silversmith and jeweller's shop, where she knew she would not be imposed upon. There was also another inducement which took her there, a little card placed in a corner of the window, intimated that the highest price was given for second-hand plate or jewellery. The proprietor of this shop was a person of some importance in the city, Bailie Mundell, who took a great lead in Council proceedings, and had a great deal to say in every thing that was going forward in the town.

Bailie Mundell, although a great man, and reported to have made a large fortune, was not above attending still to business. Indeed, he was most faithful in his attendance in his shop, and when Mrs Kirke entered, she found him in his wonted station behind the counter.

The widow, though very clean and decent-look-

ing, had very much the appearance of a pauper ; and the worthy bailie naturally thought, as the wares in his shop were beyond her line of purchase, that she was come in to beg. So he took the matter in his own hand, and answered a question before it was asked. "No, no, honest woman," said he, in a peremptory tone of voice, "you can't be served : we serve nobody here, that's a rule."

"Don't you serve even your customers ?" retorted the widow, in a tone of repartee, which sounded rather too smart in the ears of the bailie, who was not used to such freedoms. "I tell you once for all, you can't be served," rejoined the bailie, in a more decisive tone ; "I'll thank you to go out, and shut the glass-door, to keep the snow from drifting into the shop."

The widow obeyed one part of the gentleman's orders ; she carefully shut the glass-door, but, instead of going out, she walked close up to the counter, and stood exactly opposite the portly proprietor. Now, the bailie was a humane enough man, but one that could not brook his dignity to be thus tampered with ; and swelling with the full importance of his civic authority, he was considering what he should say or do, within the bounds of Christian moderation, to punish the insolence of this old woman, when she, laying the trinket down upon the glass-case on the top of the counter, thus addressed him.

"Sir," said she, in a respectful tone, "if I had been a fine gay lady, that had come to your door in a chariot, and had stepped into your shop with eyes rolling in covetousness, and with a dishonest heart, to order plate and jewellery I never meant to pay

for, how would you have received me ? But because I am a poor widow, whom the hand of Providence has brought low, even so low that I have not tasted a morsel this day, and have nothing to take, but have come to offer to you in sale, in order to sustain life, this trinket, which is more precious to the heart of the owner than all the contents of your ware-room, how do you spurn me?"

" You should have told that you had come on business," said Bailie Mundell, in a mollified tone, and glancing out at the corner of his eye towards the trinket, the sight of which raised his curiosity, and he thought if it was not a thing which it would be either profitable or safe for him to purchase, he would at least have the satisfaction of detecting theft, if it were a stolen article.

" You did not give me time, sir," replied Widow Kirke ; " you were so eager to deny the charity I never asked. But time is precious, sir, at least to me, and I will thank you to say what is the most you can give for that ornament."

" Are you sure it is honestly come by ?" said the bailie, looking askance at the locket, but without deigning to put his hand on it.

" If you have any doubts about it, sir," replied the widow, in a tone, and with a manner of integrity, which none could question, " you may make every investigation. My name is Widow Kirke ; I live No. 75 Brodie's Entry, — Lane, and I am a member of the church of which you are an elder."

" I think I have seen the face before," said the bailie. " Don't you sometimes sit in the free sittings behind the elder's pew, and sometimes on the steps of the pulpit ?"

"I do, sir," answered Mrs Kirke.

"I know the face well," rejoined the bailie, taking up the locket, and examining it through a glass ;
"I know the face well."

"I daresay you must, sir," remarked Mrs Kirke, "who recognised this gentleman to be the manager of the Royal Infirmary, who wished Margaret to be sent there, but she did not put him in mind of the circumstance. "I will be obliged to you," continued she, "if you will have the kindness to say what is the most you can give for that ornament, as I have little time to spare."

"The fact is," said the Magistrate, taking another glass of stronger magnifying powers to examine the trinket, "these things, made up for sale, are only made to catch the eye, and are never of great value. I can tell it won't sell for much. Besides, it is sore damaged."

"That cannot be, sir," said the widow, "for if ever any thing was taken care of, it was that. It has been kept as the apple of an eye."

"I can't help that," rejoined the bailie ; "I tell you it has been damaged, and spoilt with water."

"If it be so, sir," replied Widow Kirke, "it has been wet with very precious drops, tears wrung from a broken heart."

"Ah!" said the bailie, "some keepsake from a sweetheart, I suspect. Those things are all nonsense, my good woman."

"So people come to your time of life and mine, sir, may think," replied Mrs Kirke ; "but, perhaps, it did not always seem so to us."

"Perhaps, not," rejoined the bailie, re-examining the article in question, and reading the inscription

on the back. "But," continued he, "as I was remarking, it has never been of great value. Those London things are just made up for sale, and though showy, are often, as appears to them that are judges, very clumsily executed. Here, for instance, is an article in the same style, but of very different quality and workmanship." And while he spoke he directed Mrs Kirke's attention to a locket of his own manufacture, which he took from the glass-case on the counter. Alas! the poor woman could have appreciated better the value of a penny loaf. "This," continued Mr Mundell, "is an article I could hold up my face to. It is made of standard gold, and is of the finest workmanship; only compare the difference of the setting of these two articles. Yours is quite superficially and clumsily done. Now, look at this, and I can answer for its durability, and its giving full satisfaction to the wearer." And the bailie, to shew off the piece of goods, polished it up with the palm of his hand, and held it up exultingly in a proper point of view for Mrs Kirke to admire.

"It is very valuable, indeed, sir, I daresay," said Mrs Kirke, who was miserable at all this delay; but, pray, sir, be kind enough to say what you can give me for the one I have brought. Ah! if you knew it, sir, to say nothing of myself, who have not yet broken my fast, at home there is a famishing and a feeble heart, waiting for my return."

"That is a deplorable thing," said the gentleman, "but really thousands are in the same state; nothing but starvation. There never was such a winter. But if you have made up your mind to part with this article, which has been a neat enough thing too, when it was new, I can give you nothing

for it, but the price of the old gold. The pearls would not do again. They have never been good, and they are now spoiled and worth nothing." And so saying, the bailie, with a pair of small pincers, at a single tweeze, remorselessly broke in sunder the fragile ornament, and the pearls, and the little mat of plaited hair which it contained, fell down upon the top of the glass-frame on the counter; and with another application of the pincers, he squeezed together the thin plate of gold and threw it into the tiny balance.

After waiting a due time till the scales gained a perfect equilibrium, Mr Mundell took out the precious metal, threw it aside into a small drawer, and took from the money-drawer some silver and copper, and counted down the price.

"It comes to rather less," said he "than four shillings—exactly about three and tenpence farthing,—and there it is."

And the widow picked up the money, including a small copper coin, estimated a farthing, and stamped with these words: "Glasgow Retailer's Token."

"Have you never got any thing," inquired the Bailie, as Mrs Kirke was pocketing the money; "Have you never got any thing from the new fund we have raised just now for giving a little extra relief in the mean time to poor householders and others, who are thrown destitute from want of work and the dearness of provisions?"

Widow Kirke said, she had got nothing, and had never heard that there was such an institution.

"Well," said Bailie Mundell, "if you will get a petition,—mind, it must not be long; we can't read long papers,—and get an elder and some respectable

neighbour to sign it, and give it in before Thursday next,—I am to be in the chair at a meeting that day,—I will see that it is attended to.”

Mrs Kirke thanked him most gratefully, and, after asking a few more particulars regarding the mode of application, was about to take her leave, when, picking up from the top of the glass-case the small plait of hair that had fallen out of the locket, “I suppose,” said she, “this is of no use to you, sir?”

“None in the world,” said the Bailie. “It would just be swept away when the shop is cleaned. You may take it with you.”

Widow Kirke begged for a small piece of paper to fold it in; and she laid it carefully in her bosom, and then, with a profound courtesy, bade the bailie a most respectful adieu.

Mrs Kirke got a respectable tradesman, with whom she was acquainted, to draw up a short petition for her, and it was lodged, as Bailie Mundell advised, to be considered at the committee-meeting. But time passed on, and no answer ever came.

CHAPTER XXX.

“Content, though mean.”

One morning, some time, after this, Mrs Stalker entered with a face of importance and joy. She was wrapped up in the invalid style, with a nondescript shawl, and some strange things upon her head, and she was altogether a few degrees more dirty-looking than usual. She held in one hand, between her finger and thumb, about the third part of a red her-

ring, and in the other was a small, cracked bowl of coarse earthenware full of oatmeal.

"I hope I see you well," said Mrs Kirke with all politeness; "or better at least, as you are able to be out."

"I thank you, Mrs Kirke," said Mrs Stalker. "I'm aye mendin'. How are ye haudin' yoursel' ? and how's your friend ben the house ?"

"Much about our usual," replied Mrs Kirke.

"Weel," rejoined Mrs Stalker, "set by that bit herrin' and lock meak. Ye'll think I hae come to my kingdom when I am giein' gifts ; but I'll tell you how it was. Ye ken," continued she, sitting down close to the grate, "the haill town's been puttin' in a perfect fever wi' word o' a new cess that's to be puttin' on the public on accoont o' the badness o' the times ; and the woman that's but-an'-ben wi' me heard for a certain frae Tam Lowrie,—him that's foresman to Bailie Corstorphine,—that there was to be nae respect o' persons, but that the puirest that gangs was to be garr'd pay the cess as weel as the rich, or else be prosecute wi' rigour o' the law. Heaven proteck us, said I, if they fa' on us like a wheen Turks, what's a puir widow woman like me to do ? And, what wi' fricht and the trouble that was hingin' about me, I lay like a deid dowie, and I could neither blind in my bed, nor let a mouthfu' o' ony thing ower my throat. Weel, yestreen, afore the darknin', when I fand mysel' a wee settleder, I was switherin' whether I would strive to rise and licht a spunk o' fire, or whether I would just lie still and try and gather some heat aneath the blankets and the bit auld carpet I hae for a coverin', when a chap comes to the door. 'Come in,' cried I, thinkin' it was Bauby Greenfield ; 'what needs ye be chap-

pin' there ? And up bangs the door, and I thought I was blind whan in cam' first ae gentleman and syne anither, and shut to the door ahint them. Lord hae mercy on us, this is the cess-fowk,—sorrow b'on them ! thinks I ; and the sweat brak' out upon me, ye micht hae vrung my sark. And the twa men cam' forate, and lookit anower the bed. ' Are you Mrs Stalker ? ' said ane o' them, an elderin' man wi' pouthered hair. ' I'm a' ye'll get for her,' quo' I. And the twa lookit a' round the house, like takin' a valuation o' a' that was in't, and syne they hearkit to ane anither. ' Now, gentlemen,' said I, ' if ye're wantin' ony thing aff o' me, ye may just baith o' ye rug the hair out o' *my* heid at ance, and no cast thae envyfu' looks on the puir sticks o' furnitur ye see within the four wa's. What's the use o' life if it's to be made a perfect burden wi' sic extortionin' ? The times are ill and ill eneuch, we ken to our cost ; but they are naething to this. Ye've come to herry the house o' a puir widow woman that canna ower hersel. But tak' your wull, gentlemen ; I ken eneuch o' Scripture to hae learned to submit to the powers that be. But Lord keep us frae the powers that are ringin' at this present time ; for it's hell upon yearth to be in siccan merciment ! ' I maybe said a hantle mair ; but the youngest o' the twa, a gey birkie chield, turned about and said, ' Do not be afraid, good woman ; we are come to *give*, and not to *take*. We are from—(I think they ca'd it)—the new Relief-Committee.' ' That is anither thing,' said I, starting up upon my elbow ; ' Gin ye hae come wi' the shule an' no wi' the rake. I'm vex'd the house is sae ill redd up, and that I canna rise and dicht twa chairs for ye ; but just lean ye doon, gentlemen, ony gait : never heed the cat.' Now, the ess-bucket, and

the bit woollen washin'-cloot I keep for dryin' up the rain that comes in like a river at the chess o' the window, were on the tap o' ae chair, and the coal-axe, and a wheen shavin's, and the cat were on the ither. 'Bang aff the chair, ye ill-mannered tinkler,' cried I to the cat, real wicked; but the auld ruffian ne'er fashed his thum', or let on he heard. 'Never mind,' said ane o' the gentlemen, 'we won't sit down.' 'Winna ye?' said I. 'No,' said he.

"Then," said the elderin gentleman wi' the pouthered hair, 'what do ye most stand in need of?' 'Ye're the first ane ever askit me that question,' said I. 'But gin I wad begin to tell, it wad be a gey lang list; as lang's the day and the morn, I'm thinkin'.' 'But we can't supply you with every thing,' said the gentleman. 'It's no to be thought, sir,' said I. 'But I never, since I was a leevin' sinner, got a benefit aff o' ony thing or ony body.' 'And how do you live, then?' said the auldest o' the twa. 'Indeed,' quo' I, 'no very weel, sir; but I aye mak' a fend, and never compleens.' 'You can't be very ill off when you keep a cat,' said the young ane, lookin' through his spy-glass at the cat. 'Troth, sir, gin it wasna for the cat I wid be eaten up wi' mice an' rottins,' quo' I. 'You have something from the parish, have you not?' quo' he.

'Ou aye,' said I, 'I get it wi' a fecht, and they're aye threatenin' to tak' it aff, because I mak' twa-three bawbees at an antrin time at shawl clippin'.' 'And how much do you get off the parish?' quo' he. 'Half-a-crown in the month, sir,' said I. 'Ah,' said the young birkie, 'that's not a bad thing.'

"Na, I never said it was a bad thing," quo' I, 'But there could be nae harm dune, sir, gin ye

wantit to ken how weel ane could leeve on sic an aliment in your stentin' yoursel' to that, and see how fat you will grow upon't. I've heard tell,' quo' I, 'o' the Duke o' York, or some o' the king's fowk, pittin' himsel' upon the allowance o' a common soger, to mak himsel' sensible how far it would gang.'

'Well,' said the elderin gentleman, 'here is a ticket for a hundredwecht o' coals, and here is another ticket for a peck o' meal o' the best quality, and we will give you a shillin'.

"'But see you don't spend it in drams,' said the young chield. 'I reckon,' said I, 'the publicans wadna grow rich, gin a' body drank as few drams as I do. But mony thanks atweel, for I never got as muckle aff o' ony body a' my days. Have you been long ill?' said the ane wi' the pouthered hair. 'Only twa or three days, sir,' said I, 'wi' an ill cauld.'

"'And how are you in your mind?' said the young ane.

"'There's naething vrang wi' *my* mind,' quo' I, 'and no muckle vrang wi' my body either. And I think this that ye hae gi'en me will ack like a charm, and gin thae cess-fowk wad bide awa', and I were ance upon the floor-head again, I wad just be like in a perfect paradise.' 'It's a grand thing to be content,' said the auld ane.

"'Ou aye, sir,' said I, 'what gude does it do to grumle? But oh, like a dear, tell me,' quo' I, 'think ye will the cess-fowk be here?'

"The twa gentlemen leuch to ane anither, and said they didna ken. 'Forgie ye, sirs!' quo' I, 'its nae lauchin.' Sae, wi' that they bade me gude afternoon, and no to be feared for the cess-fowk. 'Aweel,

sirs,' quo' I, 'I houp they may brak their leg gin they offer to come here. Gude nicht to ye, gentlemen, and mony thousand thanks, for I think ye've workit a miracle this day. And for ony favour, look to your feet gain doon the stair, for mony ane's gotten their death amaist wi' the twa broken staps garrin them fa' on the breed o' their back.' Sae aff they gae'd, and they wadna be weel out at the close-mouth, whan out I banged out ower the bed, and flang on my claes; and I took the auld pock I keep for carryin' in a pickle coals, and aff I gangs wi' the coal ticket; and I broucht hame the half o' the hunderwecht at twa carriages, and I lichted a blink o' fire. But I was sae defeat that I wasna able to gang back for the lave, or the peck o' meal; sae I just lichted the pipe and took a smoke, to see gin it wid settle the nerves, and then I tumbled anower the bed again real silly. Sae this morning, when I gaed for the peck o' meal and the pickle mae coals, I boucht a red herrin', and I took a bit to bring my stamach round, and I've broucht the lock meal to let you try it, and the wee nip o' herrin' is for your friend in by, whase stamach, like my ain, is, I daursay, baith blenched and wairsh wi' naething but the tawtie or the blash o' tea; and she'll find it like a-medicine, if it's dune afore the ribs on the pint o' a fork, or on the tap o' the fire upon the tangs, if there be nae lowe to cause ony reek."

Mrs Kirke expressed a great many delicate scruples about depriving Mrs Stalker of the articles she had brought; but Mrs Stalker overruled all these by politely bidding her "haud her tongue, for they warna worth makin' sic a palaver about."

"But I was fit to dance my lane," continued Mrs

Stalker, "that I was sic a fule as let the gentlemen gang without pittin' in a word for *you*; but I was sae ta'en at the first, and syne they gaed aff sae abruply, that it clean gaed out o' my mind till they were awa.' "

"I am sure I am obliged to you," said Mrs Kirke.

"Na', ye're naething obliged to me," rejoined Mrs Stalker, "it wad hae been but a sma' obligation *that* atweel. But if I kent whare ony o' the gentlemen staid, I'm sure I wadna be laith to gang and gie them in a bit line wi' your name, and let them ken ye wad be naething the waur o' a pickle coals or sae."

Mrs Kirke was struck with the generosity of Mrs Stalker's sentiments; and she felt something like a qualm of conscience that she had not told her of her application to Bailie Mundell, which, according to his advice she had made, but which, as yet, had seemed to be entirely overlooked. But she now informed her what she had done, and Mrs Stalker appeared to feel no displeasure at Mrs Kirke's want of confidence in her, in not having communicated the circumstance at the time she gave in the petition; and the mention of Bailie Mundell's name awakened up a new train of recollections regarding him, which put to flight all other considerations.

"Bailie Mundell!" exclaimed Mrs Stalker, "it ill sets him to be sae neglectfu' o' ony puir body's case. He wasna aye as big a man as he is now. I mind him a lang tangle o' a prentice callan, wi' a harn brat afore him and fustian sleeves upon his arms, working in Mr Blackie's shop, and lookin' gyin like as gin his kail warena ower fat, nor his parritch steered ower thick o' meal; and if a' be true, his mither, she was a decent woman though, had her ain

troubles after her man dee'd to keep a' richt and ticht; and she plowtered aye and wuish at a pickle claise as she could get them, or drew a thread at the wheel: sae the Bailie wasna born wi' a siller spoon in his mouth mair nor me, and he should keep a' that in mind, and no be sae pridefu'. But weel I wat it's no him mair than anither; but the warld now has really gane out o' a' character thegither."

Mrs Kirke answered this observation in words which implied that the world, she feared, was much the same as it ever had been, and ever would be. And after some farther conversation, Mrs Stalker volunteered to take Bailie Mundell in her own hands and remind him of his duty. Accordingly she hastened home to put her attire in order for entering his presence, and before she went she returned to Mrs Kirke's to shew herself with what she called her "clean mutch," but which in any other eyes but her own must have looked an incorrigibly dirty one.

Mrs Stalker, with the certainty of a blood-hound, tracked out the worthy bailie from his shop to the bank, from the bank to the committee-room, and from the committee-room to his dwelling-house in — Square, where she fastened upon him while in the act of ringing at his own door-bell in company with another gentleman, whom he was taking home to dine with him. And Mrs Stalker assailed him with the whole weight of her arguments, drawn from the rich stores of her own mind, and early recollections regarding the honest gentleman's juvenile history, together with all those interesting family secrets, which great men like to forget, concerning themselves, and which common courtesy makes the

world forget in its deference to great men, till the perspiration broke out at every pore of him ; and, he cut short, Mrs Stalker's affecting reminiscences regarding the " honest woman, his honour's mither," by pledging himself to attend to her friend Mrs Kirke's case ; and to shew he was in earnest, he referred the matter to his friend, the gentleman that was along with him, who happened to be the secretary for the new board of relief, and that gentleman noted down the address in his note-book, and promised to send visitors to inquire into the merits of the case as soon as possible.

CHAPTER XXXI.

" There is a history in all men's lives."

SHAKESPEARE.

Let the reader now look back on the events in the history of Margaret Inglis, and it will be remembered that she lost by death her humble friend, Mrs Buchanan. It was on the self-same day of this bereavement that Charles Weirham, returning from sea, arrived in London, and directed his steps to No. 19, Austin Friars, the office of his late father's agents, Messrs Draper and Sparrow, solicitors. Mr Sparrow, the junior partner of the firm, was a fine dashing man, with a splendid house, a splendid wife, and a splendid family. The other partner, Mr Draper, was an old bachelor who had no house of his own, but lived in a plain lodging, which he had occupied for thirty years, but he possessed wealth which outweighed out and out all Mr Sparrow's more dazzling acquisitions.

Charles, now Lord Weirham, ignorant of almost all that had taken place since he left home, had just set foot on the shores of England, after having endured even more than the ordinary hardships of a sea-faring life. He was shewn into Mr Draper's room. It was about five o'clock. Mr Draper was just winding up his concerns for the day, before going to dinner. He did not know Lord Weirham, and Lord Weirham did not know *him*. An explanation took place. But notwithstanding the surprise at the unexpected visitor, Mr Draper could not delay his hour of dinner. He was always punctual to a moment. He invited Lord Weirham to accompany him to his tavern, where he had dined since ever he commenced business. Lord Weirham consented; a coach, as usual, was waiting for Mr Draper, and the two set off.

Lord Weirham learned from his agent that Lady Weirham and her daughters were residing at Brussels, but they were expected immediately in London to claim their share of a legacy amounting to L.10,000, which old Lord Weirham's sister, a maiden lady who had just died, had left to be divided equally among the family. Mr Draper was in the midst of giving all this information to his guest, when a third party was announced, who had some business with Mr Sparrow. Mr Sparrow had gone out of town to dinner, and on calling for him, this person had been directed to come to Mr Draper at his tavern. Mr Draper went into another room to talk with this stranger, but in a short time he returned with him, and announced him to Lord Weirham as Mr James Hay Inglis, the son of Sir Archibald Hay Inglis.

Lord Weirham, in former years, had met with this gentleman. Their acquaintance was slight; but, as may easily be supposed from their connections and interests being in the same part of the country, a few hours' conversation about Scotland and the county of —, where their properties lay, made them intimate.

Mr Hay Inglis took Lord Weirham home to his father's house with him to supper. The former had already arranged to depart on the morrow for Scotland. Lord Weirham had no inducement to remain in London, and the two made it up to go together, and next day they sailed in a Leith packet.

Sir Archibald Hay Inglis was an ambitious, greedy man. He had worked his way into parliament by crooked politics. He could not say, How do you do? to a man in the streets without a view, however remote, to his own self-interest.

He had been twice married, and he had married both his wives for the purpose of enriching himself. His first wife was sister of an eminent banker, who had no family of his own; and by her he had a daughter. His second wife was daughter of a great porter-brewer, by whom he expected a large fortune; but the brewer's agent failed and ruined him, by which Sir Archibald got nothing. Notwithstanding this disappointment, Sir Archibald was a very wealthy man; but his son and heir James, his only child by his second marriage, was quite qualified to spend what his father was so carefully gathering.

James Hay Inglis was a handsome young man, who looked rather older than he actually was. His features were finely formed, but the expression of his face was singular, and far from good. Some

people thought this unpleasant expression wore off when one got used to it ; others thought it got worse. He was accomplished on the turf and in the ball-room, qualities which his father reprobated ; but he managed canvassings at elections to his father's heart's content, which helped to cover, in Sir Archibald's eyes, a multitude of the sins against economy, which he was constantly perpetrating.

When Lord Weirham and Mr Inglis arrived in Edinburgh, they repaired to one of the principal hotels. Mr Bland, who had been on the outlook for the arrival of his friend and client, Mr Inglis, received notice whenever they came, and he immediately waited on them ; and this call of Mr Bland was followed up by an invitation from him of the two that day to dinner, at his house, to meet a few friends.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“ — We are best of all led to
Men's principles by what they do.”

Mr Bland had too much good taste ever to have large parties. He admitted none to his table but the elite of the land. Except it might be when he gave an occasional scrap-dinner to his clerks, who were invited to consume the refuse of the elegant and costly feast which had been given to a select and distinguished party the day before. His dinner parties seldom exceeded the number of ten or twelve, and on this occasion, when Lord Weirham and Mr James Hay Inglis were asked, the guests they were to meet were as follows, to-wit, Dr Towart, the ce-

lebrated champion of the Sierra Leone mission, who had just returned from his labours among the West Africans, and was on a begging expedition on their behalf through the principal towns of Britain; Mr Campbell, younger of Westerfield, who was an especial friend and companion of young Bland's; General Sir Theodore — a military knight; the Lord President, and the Solicitor-General. Colonel Gilbert, an old friend of Mr Bland's, was expected to join this party, but a message arrived about half an hour before dinner with an apology, as he had been seized with a fit of gout.

Mr Bland always gave entertainments in a style worthy his distinguished visitors. The repast was served in solid silver, and a tolerably numerous committee of attendants in rich livery and white gloves managed the affairs of the table and side-board with all the elegant activity of men highly accomplished in their profession.

Some envious, little-minded people ventured to think that all this was a cut beyond what a W. S. should have, but they did not bear in mind that Mr Bland was by birth a gentleman, and entitled to all these things.

The gentlemen soon rising from table, joined Mrs Bland and her two daughters in the drawing-room, and the party disposed themselves in groups according to their different tastes. Dr Towart stationed himself beside Mrs Bland, into whose willing ear he poured a beautiful recital of his adventures among the Timmanees, with an edifying account of his own exertions among them, and of the conversion to Christianity of some of the Greegree men, and of their progress in the arts and sciences; and Mrs

Bland responded to all this with amiable sentiments of astonishment and admiration at his unwearied zeal, while the gentleman himself was aware, by the impression he was making, that he was securing her own attendance and that of the whole clique with which she was allied, at a public meeting to be held the following week in the Assembly Rooms, at which he was to hold forth. Meantime, young Campbell and young Bland, remote from the rest, monopolized a far off sofa, where they sipped their tea and talked over some recent pranks in which they had participated together, and the recollection of which seemed to afford them much amusement. Mr Hay Inglis, who had a fine ear and was extravagantly fond of music, was riveted to the side of the Misses Bland at the grand pianoforte, and these young ladies were very pretty, and fascinating, and highly accomplished, and their music was a perfect treat.

Apart from all, in the vicinity of the fire-place, stood the Lord President, the Solicitor-General, and Sir Theodore —, with their three learned heads all together, and each with a cup of coffee in his hand, and the three scowled a unanimous refusal of the cake that was proffered them as an accompaniment to the coffee; and they laid their heads together again, and looked like men plotting a conspiracy. And after stirring their coffee till they had worn the points of the spoons, they swallowed each his cupful at a draught, and then, with the taciturn dignity which became them, they walked off, and disappeared with the mysterious air of persons who were gone on the instant to set fire to the train they had been laying to blow up the community at large.

During all this, Lord Weirham was deeply en-

gaged in conversation with Mr Bland. There was a thousand interesting queries he had to make regarding what had taken place since he went to sea; and he lingered on, still prosecuting his inquiries, which at first extended to a very wide range, embracing the general news of the country. But, by degrees, the circle lessened, till his curiosity seemed to centre in one point, viz. the local news about his native place, with all which Mr Bland was well acquainted from his professional connection in that quarter.

All this anxiety to receive information on the part of Lord Weirham had but one motive and one end in view. There was an object of all-engrossing interest at heart, which alone he wished to be informed about; and, in order to gain this point, he asked numberless preliminary questions concerning persons and things of no interest to him at all.

Mr Hay Inglis was in no haste to tire of the elder Miss Bland's music, and his enthusiastic admiration of herself and of her performance seemed to increase as the evening advanced, and he, and Lord Weirham, and Mr Campbell lingered after the others had left, till Mrs Bland ordered up a supper-tray with some slight refreshments.

The young ladies were just finishing a duet before they drew in to the table. Lord Weirham and Mr Bland rose from the couch which they had appropriated to themselves during the evening, and stood together for a few minutes talking in a confidential undertone. The changes which had taken place at Ingliston was the theme. A few audible interrogations made by Lord Weirham regarding Sir Norman and Lady Grace might have reached the ears

of the rest of the company if they had been disposed to hear ; but their attention was otherwise engaged, and an interrogation less audible and less confidently put, regarding the destination of Sir Norman's orphan daughter, and accompanied with a confusion of manner which Mr Bland's keen eye detected, was answered by Mr Bland in a mild tone of commiseration, as if deploring the unhappy fate of the individual in question.

Lord Weirham started, and regarded Mr Bland with earnest impatience.

" Ah, poor thing," said Mr Bland, looking downwards and shaking his head solemnly, and half-closing his eyes, while his voice was lowered almost to a whisper ; " she was brought up with too high notions. It was all Lady Grace's fault."

" But where is she at present?" gasped Lord Weirham, whose anxiety gave him boldness to prosecute the inquiry.

" Nobody can tell, I dare say," muttered Mr Bland, in that indistinct tone of voice in which evil spirits mutter their infernal spells ; and, approaching closer to Lord Weirham, he grumbled forth something into his ear, which conveyed the impression that she had become a common prostitute on the streets of Glasgow. " It was most distressing, my Lord," added Mr Bland, more audibly, and retreating a pace or two, and scrutinizing his guest to see the effect he had produced. " It was most distressing, and doubly so to me who really was disposed to take a friendly interest in her."

The devil in hell alone could have inspired him to utter such a malicious lie. Had the heart of Lord Weirham been smote asunder with a stroke that in an

instant extinguished life and vitality, it could not have fallen on him with a more deadly shock. He staggered towards the chair allotted him at the supper-board, and sat down. Mr Hay Inglis took his place opposite to him, and Mr Bland, whose voice, after the utterance of this diabolical invention, seemed to gain courage to talk louder on the subject, had the effrontery to appeal to Mr Hay Inglis if he knew any thing about Miss Margaret Inglis? "My cousin Margaret I suppose you mean,—Sir Norman's youngest sister?" said Mr Hay Inglis.

"Oh no," replied Mr Bland. "Sir Norman's daughter, whom poor Lady Grace, with mistaken notions of kindness, really *spoiled and ruined*."

"Oh, the person, I recollect, you wrote to my father about some time ago?" rejoined Mr Inglis. "I remember now, you pleaded so powerfully in her behalf you had almost hooked my father in to settle some sixty or eighty pounds a-year upon her; and then you wrote afterwards that she had not turned out well. Oh yes, I remember the circumstance quite well now. Well, what did you say had become of her?"

A prudent compression of the lips, and a significant motion of the head from Mr Bland, accompanied with a sigh, apparently at the recollection of the sin that exists in the world, indicated to Mr Inglis that it was not a subject for farther discussion before his two daughters. And the party for a few moments were silent.

Lord Weirham declined eating any thing, and after swallowing a single glass of Madeira, he rose to depart. "We shall all go together, my Lord," said young Campbell, rising also. And Mr Bland's

three guests took their leave, accompanied by Mr Bland, junior, who merely wanted a walk, as he had been cooped up all day in the Parliament House.

When the party issued out into the street, it was one of those splendid, glorious nights of moonshine, on which, when one goes abroad and looks aloft, he feels as if he actually could fall down and worship the beautiful orb that rules the night; and in the abundance of the heart's admiring wonder, there do sometimes burst from the lips, in spite of one's self, a few words of perhaps idolatrous adoration.

The four gentlemen passed along several of the principal streets and squares. Young Bland was their conductor, the other three being comparatively strangers in the place, and in leading them through one of the narrow back lanes of the new town, their progress was interrupted by a *row* in the streets occasioned by some tradesmen who had just issued from a tavern in a state of intoxication. There was a loud clamour of angry and tipsy voices. Several policemen were trying to quell the disturbance, and in the midst of the fray appeared a young lady dressed in a black satin pelisse and light coloured boots, and a white hat with feathers, bandying oaths with one of the policemen.

"What can all this be," said young Campbell, eyeing the scene with curious interest.

"We shall have some fun," said young Bland, approaching the crowd, and Mr Hay Inglis and Campbell, according to his example, drew near also.

"We had better pass on, gentlemen," said Lord Weirham, not liking the delay his companions were making. But Inglis, Bland, and Campbell had made a fair halt, and Lord Weirham, whose remonstrances

were disregarded, left them, and hastened home alone to his hotel.

Next morning, on descending to his parlour, he found breakfast in readiness. He waited a short time for Mr Hay Inglis to join him at that meal, but as he did not make his appearance, he rang for a waiter, and bade him inquire if Mr Inglis were coming to breakfast. The waiter said Mr Inglis had been very late out at a party last night, and would breakfast in bed.

Lord Weirham sat down to table alone, took some refreshment, then wrote a note to Mr Inglis, saying that he had changed his mind about going to — shire and visiting Weirham Castle at present, and that he intended to return to London and meet his mother and sisters, who might probably be there by the time he arrived, if not, he perhaps would go over to the Continent and join them there. This note he left for Mr Inglis, and without farther deliberation, he went out and took his seat in the London mail.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"So fickle is the state of earthly things,
That ere they come into their aimed scope,
They fall so short of our frail reckonings,
And bring us bale, and bitter sorrowings,
Instead of comfort."

SPENSER.

When the events of time, and all their dependencies, are unfolded in eternity, it will open up a never-ceasing theme of wonder and of praise to the holy and redeemed spirits to discover in what

manner the machinations of the wicked have been overruled by God, for good to them that love him, and for glory to himself. Then shall the ways of God's providence shine out without a veil, and all those contingencies which mar human happiness, shall then have ceased to be evils.

Charles Weirham, after a weary term of hard service at sea, during which period he had been deprived of almost all communication with those at home who were near and dear to him, had also been debarred by circumstances from female society, so that, if he had even been so disposed by a fickle nature, as to transfer his attachment from Margaret Inglis to another, he had had no opportunity of intercourse with any who might have made his affections waver.

It seems hardly any merit to say that he still loved her. Through all the years of absence he had cherished the remembrance of her with the strongest affection; and when he put his foot once more upon his native shores, and knew that he was enfranchised from all control, his whole soul glowed with the renewed fervour of his early attachment, and, in spite of every prudential consideration, it was his firm purpose to raise her to share in union with himself, the place in society which he now held.

But, by some unlucky chance, as one might say in popular language, but more correctly, by the permission of the Disposer of all events, he entered first the house of Mr Bland, a man whose infernal malice and ill-will followed the innocent object of his own unhallowed and disappointed passion; and his appalling communication to Lord Weirham, conveyed in a way that left no doubts of the certainty

of his information, fell with such a blighting influence upon him, that he never afterwards was like the same being that he had been before. He returned to London, where he mixed in those circles into which his rank naturally led him; and if surrounding objects could not change the current of his thoughts, they at least did not heighten the misery of his reflections, by presenting aggravating associations.

Time passed on. His mother and sisters had come to reside there with him. They continually urged upon him the necessity of making a wealthy marriage to save their falling house. His legal advisers urged the same, but all their solicitations would have been in vain, but for one circumstance which fixed his lot.

There was about Lord Weirham that air of melancholy interest which makes a man an object of ridicule to his gay male acquaintance, but which, in the eyes of the other sex, is highly prepossessing. I do not undertake to enumerate the long list of the young, the brilliant, and the beautiful, who, notwithstanding the well-known embarrassment of his circumstances, would gladly have united their fortunes with this interesting young nobleman, who was become among them the unconscious object of their admiration. But if prudence and delicacy made many disguise their sentiments, there was one individual whose mind was as delicately constituted as any of them all, whose peace was broken by the intensity of the affection which she cherished for him, and which could not be concealed.

This individual was Miss Hay Inglis, the only daughter of Sir Archibald by his first marriage. She inherited a large fortune from her mother's

brother, the rich banker. Before his death, he settled his money upon his niece, in such a way that none of her father's family could touch it; and in the event of her dying without issue, it all went to a distant relation by the mother's side. This young lady had never been on cordial terms with her step-mother Lady Hay Inglis, and she left her father's house at an early age, and went to reside with an old dowager of high rank, who was distantly connected with her mother's family.

Miss Hay Inglis was not a beauty, but she had personal attractions, and she was very amiable; and the splendid fortune which she possessed secured for her many admirers in the gay London circles in which she moved. But Miss Hay Inglis was fastidious. Neither rank nor title seemed to move her, and she rejected every offer.

At last she saw one who fixed her affections. Lord Weirham might have been in company with her a hundred times, without his ever noticing her presence, but *her* partiality for him soon became obvious and remarkable. He was invited as a frequent guest to the house of her friend Lady —, with whom she resided. His mother, and sisters, and law friends, urged him to pay his addresses in a quarter where he was so likely to be successful, and where the advantages were so manifest. Their entreaties would not have overcome his resolution, but from the conviction that, on his account, the peace of an amiable individual was gone, he at last yielded and married the heiress.

She was his senior by several years, and, alas! she found by sad experience, that when attachment does not spring first on the right side there is little happiness.

Lord Weirham was too much a man of principle to behave unkindly, but he could not reciprocate the idolatrous fondness which his wife had for him. She soon discovered that his heart was not hers, and, although it did not make her love him the less, for a woman's love is not easily extinguished, it rendered her unhappy.

After a few dull, uncomfortable years of married life, she gave birth to a son. The infant lived, but the mother fell a sacrifice.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

" Oh ! these are blest, for thine unerring voice
Hath called them so ; and crowned their lowly lot,
And sanctified the unrebelling tear.
To them divinely was the blessing given ;
And while, in shed, or cottage, swamp, or wild,
The sacred pangs of poverty endure,
There Goodness and her Lord may constant meet,
And Charity, with soft and silent foot,
Move, like an angel, to a deed of heaven."

R. MONTGOMERY.

It was one of those miserable looking days of winter on which, on the breaking up of a snow-storm, it seems as if the very demon of discomfort were abroad, and brooding over, with especial malevolence, the cities and the places where human beings are congregated together. The wind had suddenly changed, and the frost was rapidly giving way ; the atmosphere was black and heavy, and the noon no lighter than a dull twilight. A thick, small, soft, incessant rain descended, and the snow in the streets was black and poached into mud. The men and women who, in a busy, commercial city like Glasgow, are obliged to be abroad in spite of the weather,

looked in their misery, as they splashed and waded through the dirt, no better than the dregs and outcasts of society; indeed, one could hardly fancy it respectable to be out in such a day, and yet, the dripping and bespattered cloaks, and other defences against the weather, enveloped or disguised many a worthy and respectable functionary, on many an important and praiseworthy errand.

About three o'clock of the day, it being then almost dark, the lamps in the streets and the shops were lighted; but so dimly was their light seen through the mist and the dense drizzling rain that they almost imparted no benefit. In this unhappy state of things, two gentlemen were seen threading their way along the streets with all speed, sometimes abreast, sometimes apart, and sometimes the one following hard on the heels of the other, as the state of the streets and the concourse of other passengers permitted. Striking off from the principal thoroughfares, they passed through several by-ways and lanes, till they entered, one at a time, a very mean entry, which did not admit them, from its narrowness, till they took down their umbrellas. After making inquiries at various doors to right and left, they knocked at a door at the extremity of this passage, and a little white-faced old woman, with a tin lamp in her hand, opened the door.

"Is there a Mrs Kirke lives here?" inquired the foremost gentleman,—a tall man with very homely features, and a swarthy complexion, and a profusion of black, bushy hair, and his person enveloped in a large, squint-cut cloak. "*I am Mrs Kirke,*" said the little old woman in a smart English accent, and looking up at the great giant who addressed her.

And, forthwith, he stuck his dripping umbrella below his arm, and bending his head at the threshold, walked into the interior followed by his companion, — a person of neat, slight-made figure, of middle height, dressed in a brown great-coat. “ You say you are Mrs Kirke ? ” said the tall swarthy man, taking his stand in the centre of Mrs Kirke’s kitchen, and planting his feet firmly on the floor, while he raised his eyes aloft, as if to admire the ceiling which the crown of his hat almost touched. “ Yes, Sir,” said Mrs Kirke, setting down her light, and humbly waiting to hear what her visitors had to say. Upon which the plain-looking man put his hand in his pocket, and took out a slip of paper, and read therefrom these words : “ Mrs Kirke, Brodie’s Entry, — Lane, No. 75,” with a loud voice, as if he were conveying some new and important information.

“ Exactly, Sir,” said Mrs Kirke, making a half sort of obeisance ; and the plain-looking man, folding up the paper, proceeded to say, as if making an improvement on the text he had read, “ There can be no mistake then ; you are undoubtedly Mrs Kirke, the person to whom we were directed. But you are not sick ? ”

“ No, I am thankful to say,” replied Mrs Kirke, “ I am in tolerable health.”

“ It was reported you were sick,” said the swarthy man, setting aside his wet umbrella, and looking like one who would be very long of coming to the point.

“ You are a widow I suppose,” said the other gentleman, taking up the theme.

“ Yes, Sir,” said Mrs Kirke, stepping forward to relieve him also from his dripping umbrella, which

he delivered into her hands, thanking her for her attention ; and as he stood uncovered, holding his hat in his hand, the widow could not but admire his fine countenance, which accorded well with the amiableness of his manners, and she courteously requested him to approach the fire and dry his wet clothes. And he complied with her request, more in the spirit of true politeness to gratify *her*, than to please *himself* ; for, in fact, there was not as much fire in the grate as would do good to anybody. And when the good-looking gentleman was by way of toasting himself, the plain-looking one was inspecting some other memoranda he took from his pocket.

"It is my mistake," said he, "it was not you, but a young woman who was reported to be sick in your house."

"Quite correct, Sir," said Mrs Kirke ; "I gave in a state of my case to Bailie Mundell, who promised to do what he could to get some assistance for me. The young woman has been confined to bed for a long time."

"Is it your daughter that is ill?" inquired the plain-looking gentleman.

"No, Sir," replied Mrs Kirke ; "she is no relation of mine, but she is as dear, as I always say, as any daughter could be."

"She is your lodger then, I suppose?" said the swarthy gentleman.

"She is anything you like to call her," said Mrs Kirke. "She has been cast upon my care by the providence of God, and it is all my grief that I have it so little in my power to make her comfortable. She is a lady born and bred, Sir, and looked forward to better prospects ; but things have been differently

ordered by Him who directs all for the best, and now she is laid upon a bed of sickness, from which, I fear, she will never rise."

"It is very sad," said the agreeable-looking gentleman sorrowfully.

"And what is the matter with the young woman?" interposed the other.

"The Doctor says," replied the widow, "that it is an organic disease of the heart, brought on by anxiety of mind and grief, no doubt. He explains to me, that the vessels of the heart are now too small to admit the flowing of the blood, and she is subject to dreadful fainting fits. Oh! it would break your heart to see what she suffers." And widow Kirke wiped away a few tears that started in her eyes.

"I hope she is aware of her state," said the tall gentleman, "and that her mind has been directed to look beyond the perishing things of this vain world."

"If ever there was a saint on earth, Sir, she is one," replied the widow; "she has, indeed, come through much tribulation, and has washed her robes white in the blood of the Redeemer; she has borne the cross, and she looks forward to the crown, with a holy joy I never before saw manifested. My poor little dwelling here, which must seem to any one the very abode of misery, is converted by her sweet presence, into a holy sanctuary of spiritual joy. She is happy, Sir, although her heart and flesh are failing. And when I say to her, sometimes in the morning, My dear creature, how are you? 'Quite well,' she will say, 'and quite happy. My body is in great pain, but my mind is in perfect peace, and I am able to bear it.'"

Both of the gentlemen were visibly affected.

"It would be intruding, I fear, on her retirement, to ask to see her?" said the good-looking gentleman, addressing the widow; and then turning to his companion he said, "You had better give this good woman what is allotted for the invalid, and let us depart, as it is getting late."

"But that is against our rules," said the other gentleman, "we *must* see the individual herself."

"Surely, Sir," said Widow Kirke, "it is quite right.—Step this way gentlemen, and you will see that I have not imposed upon you."

The widow stepped into the small inner chamber, bearing the lamp in her hand, and was followed by the two strangers.

On a low truckle-bed, without curtains, lay the invalid. She was in a soft slumber, her head had slipped down from the pillow, and her face was concealed among the bed-clothes, and one of her hands, small, white, and attenuated, hung over the front of the bed.

"She is asleep, gentlemen," said Mrs Kirke in a soft whisper, and keeping the light shaded with her hand for fear of disturbing her. "It would be cruel to awaken her, for she so seldom enjoys rest."

"It would be very wrong," said the agreeable-looking gentleman very softly, and treading with the greatest caution, while he made a signal to his friend, indicating that it would be proper for them both to withdraw. But his friend, from long experience in visiting the poor, had learned to be suspicious of them, and the thought was passing in his mind that this sickness might be feigned; while, if he had had any observation, the small, wasted, bony fingers might have told him at once that that

could not be the case ; and he seemed deliberating about the propriety of retiring, and he stood still like a great machine which it would have taken a hundred horse-power to set in motion ; and when he did at length, with his own free will, make a move towards the doors, he, with a certain degree of awkwardness which accompanies every movement that some people make, and every thing they do, let fall his umbrella, which he had caught up according to his wont, and brought into the sick-room with him, lest any invisible hand should steal it if left in the outer place. Experience had taught him all these prudent precautions, but nothing could teach him to get rid of his natural *mal adresse*.

The noise of the umbrella falling caused the invalid to awake with a start, and she uttered a gentle exclamation of alarm.

Mrs Kirke went close beside her, and bending down, whispered something soothingly in her ear. The plain-looking gentleman gathered up his wet umbrella, and approached the bed, his large figure entirely intercepting the invalid's view of the other gentleman, who diffidently stood aloof with the air of one afraid to intrude.

"I am sorry," began the plain-looking gentleman, addressing the patient, "I am sorry in one sense, that my stupidly and unintentionally letting fall my umbrella has disturbed you, but I am glad in another sense that it affords me an opportunity of conversing with you. I learn from your friend here, Mrs Kirke, that you have had a lingering illness, and the new committee formed for the relief of those who are sufferers on account of the extreme severity of the season and the hardness of the times, have sent by

our hands a small supply for your temporal wants ; and I trust that, during the progress of this afflicting dispensation of Providence in depriving you of health, your spiritual wants have been richly provided for, and that you have been enabled to look beyond all the perishing things of this world to an enduring inheritance in that happy land where the inhabitants shall no more say "I am sick."

Margaret looked up approvingly in the stranger's face, but uttered nothing except a gentle sigh.

"What are your hopes and wishes, may I ask," pursued the stranger, "as regards this life?"

"I have none," replied Margaret in a feeble voice, which, in order to hear distinctly, the stranger had to bend towards her. "I have none," said she. "I used to have many wishes and many hopes, but all my wishes are now centred in God's will."

"I rejoice to hear you say so," rejoined the gentleman ; "and we will join in a few words of prayer, that God's holy and blessed will may become more and more the will of all his creatures, and that they may thereby be enabled to live more to his honour and glory."

So saying, he knelt down, the other gentleman and Mrs Kirke following his example, and he offered up a short but powerfully expressed supplication for all God's people, and especially for his afflicted servant, who now was stretched on the bed of sickness ; and Mrs Kirke uttered audibly, when he concluded, a fervent Amen.

"Now," said the stranger, after rising from his knees, "we will not fatigue you by prolonging our visit, but we shall, at least *I* will, come to see you

again. In the mean time, here is half-a-crown for you, and a ticket for a peck of meal."

Margaret was extending her hand to receive the boon, when the other gentleman rushing forward, clasped her wasted hand in both of his, and exclaimed, "Heaven forgive me, I had almost taken God's holy name in vain; and he pressed her hand to his lips, and he faltered out, "Margaret, dearest! have you forgotten me?"

"Mr Gowans!" exclaimed Margaret in a feeble voice, and the tears that had found no passage from her eyes for years gushed out.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XXXV.

"I never could describe what I had not seen."

RASSELAS.

Mr Gowans inquired at Mrs Kirke if she had any neighbour that she could send to his house for a bottle of wine, or any other small temporary assistance in the mean time, till he should see what could be done in the way of more permanent relief—for Mrs Kirke's place of abode was so difficult to find, he was afraid, if he sent any thing by a stranger, there might be some mistake.

Mrs Kirke assured him she had an obliging neighbour who would go instantly; and, hastening out to the passage, she called to a small boy belonging to her next neighbour, and desired him to run and tell Mrs Stalker to come to her immediately.

The little boy splashed away through the dirt, and, in a few minutes, Mrs Stalker came hurrying in.

"Will you be kind enough to follow these gentlemen," said Mrs Kirke, "to fetch something for my poor, dear invalid?"

"That I will, though it were fifty thousand mile," said Mrs Stalker. "But oh, Sirs, gin I had kent, I might hae ta'en as muckle time as flung on a decent dud o' a shawl. But the little sinner cam' wi' sic a bicker, I thought something had gane wrang, and I just flew like fire, and heaved a brat ower my shoulders to keep aff the rain." Mrs Kirke offered the use of her shawl, which Mrs Stalker accepted, and forthwith she and the two gentlemen departed.

About an hour and a half after, a knock came to Mrs Kirke's door, which was Mrs Stalker's well-known preliminary knock before lifting the latch; and in Mrs Stalker came, with a face perfectly radiant with delight, "Haud here your licht, Mrs Kirke," cried she. "Here's a back-burden for ye atweel." And, without more ado, she seized the lamp out of Mrs Kirke's hand, and held it out at the door for the benefit of some one coming down the passage.

"This way, honest man," cried she, "Lout down as laigh as ye can, or ye'll ne'er get in at the door." And in squeezed a porter with an immense bundle on his back.

"I was to take back the outer cover," said the man, setting down the burden, and disengaging his ropes from it.

"Ou aye, ye'se get that," said Mrs Stalker, "Gie the honest man a hand, if ye can, Mrs Kirke, for I hae something i' my lap."

When the man was away and the door shut, Mrs Stalker produced from her lap a bottle of wine and a paper with some broken pieces of loaf sugar wrapped up in it, which she handed to Mrs Kirke ; and besides these, she had a heel of a quartern loaf, which she kept to herself.

"Miracles will never cease," said Mrs Stalker, breaking off a piece of the crust and putting it into her mouth, and talking as she chewed. "Miracles will never cease, for I hae witnessed ane this nicht as sure as death." And she proceeded to give an account of her errand with the gentlemen. "As soon as the twa cam' to the heid o' the entry," said she, "they shook hands and parted. The lang, stour man wi' the cloak gae'd by his lane down the street, and the tither ane gae'd wast, and bade me follow. And he didna bide to walk, but he ran, and he ne'er spak a word till he cam to the end o' what d'ye ca' the big street whar his nain house is, and syne he turned to me and said, 'Have you known Mrs Kirke long?' 'Ou aye, Sir,' said I, 'I've kenn'd her syne e'er she cam to the pairt, and a canny woman she is, and a feelin' hearted, or she wadna hae ta'en sic a handfu' o' her puir sick friend that's lyin' in yon laigh bed ben in her room.' 'I fear,' said he, 'it is a very uncomfortable bed, but we must see and make it better.' 'How can it be ony ither thing than uncomfortable!' said I,—'a pickle strae intil an auld tyke that's never shaken up, and a' bund thegither; I'se warrant it's as hard's the floor-heid, and the puir crater's banes are sair wi' lyin'; but, for a wonder, the skin's aye keepit hail; Mrs Kirke applies constant the sugar o' lead cloths. It's a grand thing, Sir, to ken that sugar o' lead water keeps the

skin frae breakin'; and wi' that he gae a kind o' snocker, and out he bangs his pocket-napkin, and up wi't till his face, and he gaed aff frae me like ane in a huff, and ne'er spak' anither word. Preserve us, thinks I, what's the maitter wi' the man, hae I gie'n ony offence? but I durstna hae opened my mouth. Sae after he had gane on a bit by his lane, he paps in at an office door, and cried till a porter to follow him; and we a' three gaed till we cam to his house, a braw ane atweel, wi' a main door. And he rang wi' vengeance, and cried to the lass to bring him up a caunle, and he hauled aff his big coat, and flung't ower the ravel o' the stair that gangs doun to the kitchen. And he garred the porter sit doun i' the trance till he was ready, and he opened the door o' a grand dining-room and bade me come ben. And there was an auld leddy, I tak to be his mither, sittin' in a muckle arm-chair thrang at the needle; and there was a perfect illumination i' the room wi' a lamp hingin frae the roof, a' cut crystal, shining wi' a' the colours o' the rainbow; and aneath the lamp there was a table set for twa, wi' knives and forks and spoons, and a how-plate and a plain plate aneath't to ilka ane at head and fit, and a wee nip o' plain bread at ilka ane's hand; and there was a sma' trencher at a corner wi' twa three thin ait farls, and there was twa saut fits and a clear mustard pat, and a wide-mouthed decanter bottle fou o' speerits or cauld water, I kenna whilk; but there was twa tumblers set wi' big dram-glasses whumled doun upo' the mouth into ilk ane o' the tumblers. The auld leddy askit if she wad ring for the denner, but he said no the noo; and he gaed forate to the side-board, and poured out a fu' glass,

and hands it to me. Says I, 'Sir, that will gang to my heid and mak' me fou.' 'No fear o' that,' quo he, 'it's no kind o' speerits, it's white wine.' 'Nae maitter what it is,' quo I, 'it's stronger than onything I'm used to tak.' 'Drink it,' said he, 'and there's a bit bread,' and wi' that he shot a geay denty heel o' a laif that was lyin' i' the bread-basket into my hand. And he opened a deep drawer and took out that sealed bottle, and bade me gie it to Mrs Kirke, and syne he took out a clear sugar-bowl fu' o' lump sugar, and he coupit it a' into a piece o' a newspaper, and ramm'd it into my lap, and said, that's for Mrs Kirke too. He syne took the canle the lass had brought up out o' her hand, and bade her follow, and he gaed ben the house, and I gaed ben too, to see what was to be ackit; and the auld ledly flang by her shoo'in' and speird gin ony thing was vrang, but he ne'er gae her an answer, but intil a room he gaed whaur there was a four-posted bed wi' blue stuff coortains, and he gar't the lass harl aff twa pair o' sappy English blankets, and he gae her a hand himsel at fauldin' them. What's that for? said the auld ledly, wha I tak to be his mither. What needs ye disconvenience yoursel' wi' gie'in awa' your paim bed-claise? There's no sae few blankets i' the house, that ye need to do that. Iana' there twa kists packit fu' up i' the garret, forby what's on the spare-room bed, and what for wad ye rin the risk o' gettin' cauld wi' takin' unseasoned blankets to yoursel'? That's just the very reason, quo' he. It would be a serious thing to give things which have been so long out of use to a sick person. Sae he aye feucht awa, and faulded the blankets, and never faah'd. Syne he bade his mither, as I tak her to be, ca' up

the ither lass out o' the kitchen, and never to heed the denner, and tak her up the stair and look out amang the carpets that were laid by, for a gude big piece to row the things in, and wi' that he pu'd out a hair matrass, that lookit spleet new, frae aneath the feather tyke, and he rowed it up, and ca'ed in the man to strap it up wi' his ropes. Lordsake, thinks I, am I seein' richt? or has that dram o' wine gane to my heid? But I durstna open my mouth to ask a question. Sae after the bundle was fairly rowed and ropit up i' the carpet that the tither lass had brought doon, he wasna pleased wi' that, and naething wad sair him but he bute to hae anither cover aboon a', for fear o' the least damp fa'in on o' the beddin', and he cried to the lass to bring the largest wax-cloth cover she could find aff ane o' the big tables. It will mak it clean useless, said the auld leddy. What signifies that? quo' he. What is all we have in comparison of human life and human suffering? Lord preserve us, sic a man, thinks I, I wish he binna feay, and, as sure as death, I turned feared, for I thought he wasna ower wise, and I couldna hae spoken a word gin it had been to mak my fortune'. But after he gae the man a lift wi' the burden on his back, and bade him be sure to bring back the outer cover, but to leave the carpet, and he wad pay him his siller, I kent it was a' richt eneuch, and I couldna help sayin' to the auld leddy, when the man wi' his burden was gain out o' the door, Oh, Mem! quo' I, ye are the lucky woman, gin this be your son. Nae doubt it's no very agreeable for ye to stand and see him in a mainner rubbin' his nain house, but be assured that blessin's out o' heaven will come in baith at your doors and windows for this."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

" Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blest where'er she goes."

COWPER.

The gentleman who had accompanied Mr Gowans to the house of Mrs Kirke, hastened home to the plain lodgings which he occupied at a distant part of the town, and partook of a very homely and even scanty dinner, which his landlady had in readiness for him when he came in. In the course of the evening he went out, and directed his steps to a house in one of the principal squares. He knocked gently at the door, for the bell was muffled, indicating that sickness was in the house. He was speedily answered by a servant girl, at whom he inquired how her mistress was. The girl said she was rather better, and asked him to walk in. He was ushered up stairs to the drawing-room, where a young lady of fair complexion and very beautiful features was seated at the tea-board, in the act of taking tea by herself. She rose and shook hands affably with the stranger, ordered another cup to be brought, and invited him to join her at the tea-table.

" I am glad to hear that your aunt is rather better," said the gentleman.

" The doctors think her so, I am happy to say," replied the lady, " but she has been very ill since you were here last."

Upon which the gentlemen entered into an apology of some length, but it was a very satisfactory and sufficient one, for his not having been of late more frequent in his inquiries after the health of

her relative. "I have," said he, "been so occupied in visiting the poor, for some time, that I have almost had no leisure for other duties; and truly many distressing scenes I have seen, but none that has affected me so much as one that I have witnessed an hour or two ago, and I could not rest till I informed you of it. You know it is always to *you* I come in all my difficulties, for it is a painful thing to witness distress when one has not fully the means of relieving it."

The lady, with much grace and sweetness, said it was a great pleasure and privilege to aid him in his exertions, "For," continued she, "it is little we *can* do for each other, and we have little time to do it, and great is the account we have to give."

"My dear Miss Woodburn," replied the gentleman, "I have no doubt but that you will be able to render your account with joy. But you are always so willing, that really I have sometimes been afraid lest I should encroach too much upon your goodness, but, in the present instance, it is a case in which your sympathies must be awakened from former recollections as well as mine. Do you remember Sir Norman Inglis of Ingliston? As for myself he, next to your respected uncle, was my best friend and benefactor. Except for him, I never should have got my studies at College completed, and my honoured mother, till the day of her death, blessed him as being the means under God, of her being established in comfortable circumstances. And would you believe it, a child of his, his daughter, who was brought up in his house, and nurtured in affluence and luxury, is now in the last stages, I fear, of a mortal illness, lying in one of the humblest, nay meanest, and most

miserable dwellings in this city, destitute of a morsel of bread."

Miss Woodburn was so shocked at the communication, that she actually started up from her seat. "What is to be done for her?" said she, "really I would go with you this very instant to see her, but I dare not leave my aunt, she only slumbers just now, and the nurse is watching her, and she may awake and call for me in a moment."

"It is not a fit night, at all events, for you to venture out," replied the gentleman; "but if you could leave your aunt as long anytime to-morrow forenoon, I would call and conduct you to the place."

"But in the mean time," said Miss Woodburn, "what can be done? to-morrow my aunt may be worse, and then I could not go. Will you take some money now, or say what would be best, and come to-morrow too, and if I can I shall go."

Mr Hume, for the gentleman was no other than the son of the late Mrs Hume of Newhall Inn, assured her, that all had been done that was necessary for that night, for besides some public charity which he had been the bearer of from the New Relief Committee, a friend of his who had accompanied him, and who was one of the Committee appointed along with him to visit for that week, had, out of his own private purse, furnished the woman with whom Miss Inglis lived, with means to procure what might be wanted for the present.

After this information, it was agreed that Mr Hume was to call next day to accompany her to Mrs Kirke's, or else, in the event of her not being able to go, to arrange what was to be done: and thereupon Mr Hume took his leave.

The reader needs not be informed that Miss Woodburn was the niece of Dr and Mrs Irving. Her uncle, who had lost his health after coming to Glasgow, had been dead for some time. He had been long in a declining state, and unable to do much duty, and he had employed Mr Hume for some time as an assistant; but after he died a new minister was of course appointed to the charge, and Mr Hume was thrown out of a situation. By dint, however, of perseverance in making application in different quarters, he got employment in another parish. One of the city clergymen who presided over a very poor and populous district, engaged him for a small remuneration of L.40 a-year to visit his poor parishioners, and preach a weekly sermon to them on the Sabbath night, in a large room or hall which was hired for that purpose. Mr Hume had consequently a very laborious life, for he did his work conscientiously, and if he had not had higher motives of action than any emolument, or any praise of men, he could not have borne up under the fatigue, both mental and bodily, he was called upon to endure.

Mrs Irving had continued to be his steady friend, but she had received a shock at her husband's death, which soon had a visible effect upon her health, and now she was in a state which left but slight hopes that she would recover. As she was rather better next day, her niece, after the physician's morning visit was over, hastened, as had been agreed on, to accompany Mr Hume on his charitable visit.

Miss Woodburn was not unaccustomed to visit the abodes of poverty and distress; but Mrs Kirke's residence was a degree worse than any she had as yet

entered. And she was particularly struck with the dismal darkness of the outer apartment, which was only lighted by the fire, and which appeared the more gloomy when suddenly passing into it from the daylight. She took from beneath her mantle some useful household presents, which she gave to Mrs Kirke, and then she followed Mr Hume into the inner-room. There, the changeful sunshine of a winter sky shone in at the narrow window, and streamed down upon the low bed where the invalid lay, pale and still as death.

"Is she asleep?" said Miss Woodburn softly to Mrs Kirke.

"No, ma'am," replied Mrs Kirke; "she is only lying quiet. She has fainted several times since last night, and I have been much alarmed, but the doctor, who has just been here, thinks her no worse."

"Dear Miss Inglis," said Miss Woodburn, stooping towards her, "how are you? You do not know *me*, I daresay."

"Yes," said Margaret, "I think I have seen you before where I shall never be again. I have seen you, I think, in the church at Cultimuir;" and she extended her hand to shake hands, and the loose sleeve of her bed-gown falling back, shewed a wrist and an arm with nothing but the skin adhering to the slender bones. Miss Woodburn took the hand which was held out to her, but could not refrain from bursting into tears, and she hastened out of the room into the other apartment to compose herself there. The young image of health and beauty that she had seen at the church of Cultimuir, when her uncle was the minister, could it be the same form that was now laid so low on the bed of sickness?

The health was indeed gone, but there was still the beauty, but it was that beauty over which the words are ready to be pronounced, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes."

Wiping her tears and trying to appear cheerful, she re-entered the room, where Mr Hume had remained conversing to Margaret.

"Had I only known you were in Glasgow, how happy we might have been together," said she, sitting down on the chair at the side of the bed; "but we must hope that when you are better,——" added she, but she could not finish the sentence she intended, expressive of the hopes of health and happiness. Her heart misgave her for attempting to utter what the image before her seemed to falsify the expectation of, and she wept again, and could not, nor sought not to conceal her tears.

No change took place in the composure of Margaret Inglis; what she was feeling mentally, Heaven only knows. Streaks and spots of pink appeared on her cheeks, and were changing their position rapidly all over her countenance.

"Mrs Kirke," she said faintly.

Mrs Kirke drew near.

"Give me," added she, "a mouthful of anything, bread or water, I feel so feeble within."

Mrs Kirke hastened and poured into a tea-cup some wine, and mixed it with water, and gave it to her, while Miss Woodburn raised her up to drink it, after which she sunk down on the pillow, closed her eyes, and lay perfectly motionless, her breathing being hardly perceptible, and she remained in that state during the rest of their stay.

Before departing, Mr Hume knelt down; and in a low under tone offered up an earnest supplication at the Throne of Grace.

Miss Woodburn was anxious that some arrangement should be made to have her conveyed to a more comfortable lodging, but Mrs Kirke informed her that a gentleman had been there that morning with the doctor, and that nothing could be done till the latter decided whether it were possible or not to remove her. Miss Woodburn, in taking her leave, put into Mrs Kirke's hand some money, and Mrs Kirke, who, from the moment of her entrance, thought she had some slight recollection of her appearance, knew, by the manner in which she put the money into her hand, that it was the person who had given her the guinea-note at church, on the occasion which the reader will remember.

Mrs Kirke could almost have refused the boon. Gifts seemed now to be flowing in upon her, more than what her present wants actually required. Mr Gowans had been there very early in the day, and he had given her a supply, and begged that she would want nothing which was necessary for her comfort. The truth is, he had passed a miserable night after the discovery he had made, and he could not rest till he went next morning to inquire for Margaret, and to devise some plan for having her removed from the dismal lodging which she occupied. But he found her when he came scarcely able to speak to him. She appeared to be much worse than on the preceding evening, and he saw that it might be of serious consequences to take any step without the advice of a physician. On learning

from Mrs Kirke what medical man had been in the habit of visiting her, he lost no time in repairing to the house of Dr Wardrobe.

It was so early, that the Doctor had not yet gone out upon his rounds.

"Sir," said Mr Gowans, addressing Dr Wardrobe, on being ushered into his room, "I have come to consult you about a patient of yours."

"Be seated, Sir," said Dr Wardrobe.

"I have come," said Mr Gowans again; and clearing his voice and stopping short, he placed the *ramus aureus*,—which opens the way to the human heart,—in the Doctor's hand, *i.e.* he presented him with a very handsome fee, and thus continued:—"Doctor," said he, "the person I have come about is Miss Inglis, a poor patient to whom you have been attentive. She resides, perhaps you may remember, with a Mrs Kirke in —— Street."

"I know her well," said the Doctor. "I remember her distinctly. But, dear me, I have not been there myself lately, but my assistant, I think, *has*."

"Well, Sir," said Mr Gowans, "would it be safe to remove her to another residence?—a more comfortable one, I mean. Tell me candidly your opinion," continued he, faltering as he spoke; "tell me candidly what would be best for her, and, if my means can command it, it shall be done."

"The fact is," replied the doctor, "it was my opinion from the first that a change of air and of scene was the most probable chance of recovery for her; but there was not the slightest prospect at the time that that could be accomplished, and there was no use of prescribing it. I saw all along that it was clearly a case that would not have been admitted

into the hospital, or, at least, if it had, it would soon have been dismissed, it being one of those lingering, uncertain complaints of which no one can foresee the issue. Medical men, Sir, must confess themselves sometimes very much in the dark; and I could not, at all events, take upon me to say what should be done, till I saw her again. I am just going out; I shall accompany you there first, if you like. My carriage is waiting at the door, and we can go in it together."

"Why did you not send for me sooner?" said Dr Wardrobe to Mrs Kirke when he arrived, while, at the same time, he evidently was shocked at the change which had taken place in his poor patient since he saw her last. "My dear," said he to Margaret, gently patting her cheek, to which the colour had mounted on his entrance, "we must give you something to establish the bloom in these pretty, rosy cheeks of yours."

He said little or nothing more, but asked a few professional questions, felt her pulse, patted her cheek kindly a second time, and then hurried away.

Mr Gowans, who had remained outside of the house during the visit, walked up the entry with him. He said he could not venture to give any opinion of the case, till he saw the effect of some medicines which he meant to exhibit. But probably in a day or two he might be able to decide whether she might be removed with safety.

A few days of great anxiety to Mr Gowans passed away. But, during that short period, there was a manifest improvement in the health of Margaret. She seemed revived and strengthened by what the doctor prescribed.

One morning, on Mr Gowans coming to visit her, she appeared to be cheerful and happy. Her face beamed with gratitude, and one could almost have imagined that health was returning to it. Mr Gowans said he was come with the doctor's sanction to propose removing her to his own house, where he had an aunt who would devote herself to taking care of her.

"I am well, very well here, indeed," replied she. "You have supplied me with every comfort."

Mr Gowans adverted to the impossibility of rendering her present abode as comfortable as could be wished.

"Once I thought," rejoined she, "few houses good enough for me ; but now, any place, any place will do. If God's presence be with us, all is well."

"I hope," said Mr Gowans, "God's presence will be with you wherever you are. But it appears, from what Dr Wardrobe says, that a change of air will materially assist in the improvement of your health."

"I must not be obstinate," said Margaret. "I will do whatever you think best. But it does seem to me needless to make any change, till I go HOME once for all."

Mr Gowans knew that she alluded to that home of the believer,—the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He could not trust his voice to make any reply, but remained silent for a few moments, during which she took from beneath her pillow a beautifully bound book, which she asked him if he remembered? It was a copy of "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," and the last present Mr Gowans had given her. He recollected, when he saw it, that it was the gift he had presented to her

when he rescued her from Colonel Gilbert's carriage in the avenue at Ingliston.

"Dear Mr Gowans," said she, putting the book into his hands, "you have been my first, and now you are my last friend. I hope you will accept of your own gift as a keepsake from *me*. I know it almost all by heart; indeed, I have had little else to do for these last long years of my life but to study it, and often have I wished,—what I thought next to impossible,—that I might see you again, that I might leave it with you as a memorial of the gratitude of one who scarcely deserves to be remembered by you. Oh! it is wonderful how God has fulfilled my desire in this respect. I never thought it possible, although I wished it so often."

Mr Gowans took the book, but was unable to speak. Margaret saw he was affected, and she changed the tone of her discourse. "Although," continued she, "that dear book which you gave me has made me rejoice at the thoughts of a future rest from pain and suffering, I am not without some attachment to this life. This very morning, when I felt myself so well, oh! how I rejoiced at the thoughts of being able to do something to shew my gratitude to all my kind and dear friends, if I recovered."

Mr Gowans struck in with this sentiment, and expressed his hopes that she *would* recover; and there was not at that moment a wish nearer to his heart than that she might be restored to health and strength, and be made glad according to the days wherein she had been afflicted, and the years wherein she had seen evil.

She was removed on the following day to his house, Dr Wardrobe, whose care was now unremitt-

ting, himself attending her, along with Mrs Kirke, in the coach, furnished with a mattress, which was brought to convey her thither.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“—— Weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets.”

COWPER.

Mrs Kirke was not separated from her dear young friend, but remained with her in the house of Mr Gowans, and continued to attend her night and day with the same affectionate care which she had always manifested.

Miss Stirling, too, the aunt of Mr Gowans, entered with zeal upon the task of attendance, and this she did on account of the family of Ingliston, for which her deceased brother had such a respect; and also she did it from a much higher and purer motive, viz. true Christian kindness and sympathy for the afflicted and destitute sufferer, who was dependent on their bounty and care.

Regularly as the morning came, Mrs Stalker was seen at the area door of Mr Gowans's house to inquire for Margaret, and the bulletin issued by the kitchen maid, with whom she held communication on these occasions, was almost invariably the same for a length of time.

“No better,” or, “no worse,” was generally the answer. But in the course of time the accounts became more satisfactory, and at length it was intimated that she was in a fair way of recovery.

Mrs Stalker all along had been debarred admission

to the sick-room, but after receiving this information, she became anxious to see her, and after repeated and urgent entreaties on her part, she obtained leave to pay her a visit once more.

She was shewn up stairs to her room.

The cheering days of spring were just beginning to gladden the earth.

Margaret was up and on a sofa, which was placed near the window that she might look out. There was a bright promise of returning health in her appearance, which must have struck any one particularly who had not recently seen her.

Mrs Stalker expressed in her own way her sincere delight at seeing her so well, and she sat down near her in a chair which Mrs Kirke set for her accommodation.

"And how are you yourself, Mrs Stalker?" said Mrs Kirke, when an opportunity offered for her to make the inquiry.

"Indeed, I wadna be very weel if I likit to compleen," replied Mrs Stalker. "The laird's set the pairt aside me to sic unco like fowk, that's like to gie me my death wi' the din they mak'. There's a ram-stam wife in the tae end, wi' a roarin' wean that squeels like a brunt yow, whan naething ails't. She maks her leevin' by rakin' the ess buckets i' the mornins, and what wi' banes and clouts that's gathered up in a corner o' the trance, and a' kind o' pollution that she feshes hame—auld killed meat buried by the fleshers, wha' keep it till its walkin' rather than sell'd a penny the pund cheaper to the puir, and beasts that's dee'd their lane, and what not, that she rakes out o' the middens, and sets on in a fryin' pan, and maks a fry till her nain supper—sic a

meltooth as micht suffocate the stomach o' a soo, and gie ony body the gulsheuch, as ye micht weel ken frae the pushionable smell that it sets up through the haill land. She says her man's awa to Embro' seekin' wark, but I dinna believe she has e'er hain a man. She cam in to me yestreen, and cried, Mrs Stalker like a darlin' len' me a penny to buy a pickle snuff. Barra whaur ye like, quo' I, there's nae pennies here. When I hae siller to saw the grund wi' I'll be lennin' you pennies. Gae 'wa, gae 'wa, and snuff a lock.ess. Then i' the tither end there bides a man and his wife that's baith mortal frae mornin' till nicht, and they fecht like twa teegars. And nae langer gane than yesterday mornin', the wife ran out and pawned the man's breeks for half-a-mutchkin, and hame she cam takin' a' the breadth o' the street. Whaur's my breeks? roared the man out o' the bed, and, oh! he gae her an awfu' like name. But she was as mortal as mortal could be, and she couldna gie him nae satisfaction, and syne he cursed and he swuir like to open yearth and stane, and flang the tawtie champer at her heid, and ben she cam roarin' to me, Mrs Stalker, Mrs Stalker, I'm murdered noo, I'm clean murdered. What are ye Mrs Stalkerin' at? quo' I; gae 'wa, gin ye be murdered, and compleen to some o' your nain comrades, and dinna come to me wi' your Mrs Stalker, Mrs Stalker, and wi' that I flang the door in her face. But preserve ony body frae sic a life as I lead amang sic an uncultivate crew; naething but din and disturbance on a' hands, and ill tongue. And the room abune me is set to an auld souter body—no an ill body, I daursay, but he's aye chap chappin' for an everlastin' abune the croon o'

my heid. He has naeboddy to look till him but himsel, and he's like mysel, no very weel put on, and is ill eneuch aff, I'se warrant, for a mouthfu' o' meat. And for a' he ne'er divaulds chappin', there's mair din, I reckon, than wark. And it tak's a' that he wins to pay his room rent, and the laird's factor ca's for't every week reg'lar, and he gie's a' his bawbees till *him*, though he shouldna hae ane ahint. And doun he'll come wi' his bit goblet to *my* fire, and he'll say, unco Englified wi' his tale, Pray, Mrs Stalker, will you allow me to boil this on *your* fire, for *mine* has gone out? Oh you polest auld rogue, thinks I to mysel, what needs ye pray Mrs Stalker to me? I dinna believe your fire's e'er been in. So what can I do but let the body come anower wi' his goblet, and set it on o' *my* fire. And the maist I see him tak is a cow's neep cut in twa halves, and boil'd amang a drap plain water, and after its boilt till it's weel, he drinks the broo till his breakfast, and sets by the neep till his denner. Preserve us, man, quo' I, whan I see him drinkin' the broo o' the neep and naething till't, thae uncolike drogs is only fit for the stomach o' an animal; and wi' that he'll say, Oh! it is very good. To be sure ye are bund to think sae gin ye canna get ony better, says I, and what can I do but gang and rive a moolin' aff o' my ain laif, and heave't intill the body's bicker. But I'se lave ony ane to be the judge, gin a canny woman like me, that neither meddles nor maks wi' none, is very weel situate. Sae what wi' ae thing and a' thing, gin I leeve till the time come, I maun really tak a better house in anither sort o' a neeborhood."

"But how could you pay for a better house?" said Mrs Kirke.

"What wad ail me to do that," replied the other, "when I've been leevin' this while back like a princess in the ane I'm in? Did ye no ken that Mr Gowans, ever since ye cam here, allows me twa shillin's i' the week. Miss Stirling gie's me't out o' her nain hand every Monday morning reg'lar, when I come to speir for Miss there. And mony thing besides the twa shillin's she pits in *my* way. Dads o' riven bread and cauld meat she'll shoot into my lap, real genteel, and cry, Hae, tak that. Preserve me, Mem, I'll say, ye maun tak me for a clean gorbie a' thegither. No, no, she'll say quite agreeable, I take ye for no such a thing, Mrs Stalker."

Mrs Kirke, who had begun to manifest a little impatience at the length of Mrs Stalker's discourse, interrupted her by saying that it was just the time when she must go down stairs to get a small piece of fowl, as the doctor had ordered, broiled for Miss Inglis's dinner, and she hoped Mrs Stalker would sit a few minutes till she returned, but, at the same time, she begged of her not to talk to fatigue the invalid. Mrs Stalker, delighted at being allowed to prolong her visit, promised not to open her mouth in Mrs Kirke's absence. Whether she would have kept to this resolution or not, there was no opportunity of proving, for no sooner had Mrs Kirke left the room, than Margaret, who had been silent all the time, began to talk to her in a serious strain.

"Mrs Stalker," said she, "I may not see you again, and I have a favour to ask which I hope you will promise to do."

"That I will," said Mrs Stalker with great readiness. "It canna be great the favour that a puir body like me can grant. But what for should I no

see you again ? Has the doctor ordered ye to country lodgings, or to the saut water, at this cauld time o' year ?"

"No, no," replied Margaret rather hurriedly. Then she added with a smile, "I suspect I am going a longer journey ; for well as I feel myself, and well as people tell me I am looking, I do not think I shall recover, and there will be few to mourn for me when I am gone, but *you*, I think, will be one of the number. Therefore I wish you to take with you," and she directed her to open a trunk which stood in the room. "I wish you to take my black gown and bonnet ; you may also take my shawl. They are much worn, and almost not worth offering to any body, but they are the best I have, and I shall never need them again."

"Preserve a' leevin' !" exclaimed Mrs Stalker, taking the things out of the box as she was directed. "The fowk wad think I was ackin the leddy a' thegither gin I put on the like o' thae. But, oh, sirs, I dinna like to hear ye speakin' about no recoverin', and about fowk mournin' for ye, and a' the like o' that. Tuts, woman, ye are just lettin' your speerits grow dull wi' no ha'in the like o' me comin' in to crack to ye. Ou, aye, its an unco thing for a young person like you to be often your leefu' lane, as ye maun be at times ; nae doubt its a grand, comfortable pairt ye hae to yoursel here. But gin ye had a body comin' pappin in nows and thans wi' a' the bits o' news, it wad be real heartsome, and wid mak an unco differ on your speerits. I'm sure gin ye likit, and gin the doctor and your ither keepers had nae objections, I micht come ower i' the afternoons mony a time ; I ha'ena sae muckle to hinder me,

and crack wi' you and Mrs Kirke, and haud ye out o' langour."

Margaret thanked Mrs Stalker, but assured her that she was not dull, but felt quite happy ; and that she was particularly glad at having now had an opportunity of giving her the articles of dress, which she wished had been better. " But," continued she, " in giving you them, you must promise me that you will wear them, and go to church. Will you promise me this ?"

" I tell you," replied Mrs Stalker with great energy, " I'll promise, as sure as death, to do ony thing ye like to bid me, though it were an utter impossibility. It wad ill set *me* to say *no* to ane that's in a mainer been the maker o' my fortun. Mr Gowans says I'm to hae the twa shillings as lang as I leeve. Isna that a benefit for ye ? And as for ga'in to the kirk, that's no ill to do whan ane has twa three dacent duds to fling about them. Tam Lowrie's aye been on o' me for no ga'in. Troth, quo' I, mony a time to Tam, it's braw and easy for you to speak that's dinkit out like a nobleman, in your blue claith an' clear buttons, and your knee breeks, on the Sabbath, no to mention your rig an' fur hose, as thick as buirds ; and on the ilka days your corduroys, a' baith side and wide, and no a broken steek in them, by's a widow woman like me, that has scarce a shue on my fit to juffle through the house wi'."

" If my shoes will be of any use to you," said Margaret, " take them. You will find them in that box ; but they are so much worn, they gave me a severe cold the very last time I walked out."

Mrs Stalker took out the shoes and examined them.

"They are no sae ill," said she, "but they micht pass wi' a clout on the side; but I micht as weel try to pit my fit intil a mussel-shell as intil thae, for ilka ane o' my twa feet is as braid as a bannock fluk. But oh, dinna, I beseech ye, disappint yoursel' wi' pairtin' wi' your shoon. You could ram your nain feet fu' weel intil thae, and gang on the floor-heid wi' them, and I wadna like to tak the gown, and the shawl, and the bit bannet either, till ye see how you are to be yoursel——"

The return of Mrs Kirke with Margaret's dinner interrupted Mrs Stalker's expostulation; upon which she prepared to depart, and Margaret, shaking hands with her, bade her farewell, and remember her promise, which the other pledging herself faithfully to do went away with her bundle. Mrs Stalker's visit was followed up by one from Mr Hume. A day seldom passed without his coming to inquire for the invalid, and, when she was able to converse with him, he was admitted to her room.

Whatever money could purchase, was got for her comfort, and every thing that friendship could devise was tried. If these efforts, nay more, if prayer,—earnest, anxious prayer,—could have restored her to health, these means were not wanting. But events were otherwise ordered. A short, delusive gleam of returning health and strength faded away into the almost hopeless certainty that recovery was impossible. She as rapidly lost strength as she had gained it. Doctor Wardrobe, however, still held out hopes that a favourable change would again take place, and that she might ultimately recover; for she had such a remarkable constitution.

Her faithful friend Mrs Kirke attended her night and day, and her fatigues of attendance were lessened

by the equal share which Miss Stirling took in her labours, assisted also by an active woman hired as a nurse.

As time passed on the zeal and care of her kind friends were redoubled, instead of relaxed; and if their affectionate anxiety on her behalf, if any human means could have raised her up again from the bed of sickness, she would still have been here to repay their labour and to gladden their hearts.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

" Good God, let her sleep ever !
For I have known her wake an hundred nights,
When all the pillow where she laid her head
Was brine-wet with her tears."

WEBSTER.

We have followed Margaret Inglis through a sad existence, in which many things exquisitely painful to flesh and blood had to be suffered by her; and let us follow her to the last, when her day of trial was accomplished, and she was ready to enter upon that unmingled happiness in another world which she never had enjoyed in this.

It was the solemn hour of midnight. All the family had retired to their own apartments. Mrs Kirke watched, as she generally did in the first part of the night, by Margaret's bed while she slept. The nurse had lain down to rest herself in a concealed bed in the room, that she might be ready to rise and relieve the old woman. Margaret had been rather better during the past day, and the only symptom .

which gave her attendants any uneasiness was her continually asking what o'clock it was. But she took her supper when night came with some relish, appeared cheerful, and talked of getting better; and she composed herself to sleep under such unusually comfortable circumstances, that Mrs Kirke, while she watched by her and saw her sleep so sweetly, allowed herself to doze in her chair. But, at the hour of midnight, she was roused by a gentle voice calling to her, "Mrs Kirke."

There was a change in the tone since she last spoke which startled her venerable attendant, and she rose hastily and approached the bed.

"Well, my love," said she, "I am here." And she beheld that a great change had also taken place in her countenance.

"Mrs Kirke!" said Margaret a second time, in an eager tone of voice, and as if calling to some one at a distance.

"Well, love," repeated Mrs Kirke, "I am here. Is there any thing you want?"

"Blessings, blessings here," said Margaret, not referring to her question. "Blessings here and treasures in heaven shall be yours! I was a stranger, and you took me in." A short pause ensued; then, stretching out her hands to where Mrs Kirke stood, she exclaimed, "Oh, Mrs Kirke!"

"Well, my dear love," said Mrs Kirke, taking her hand, "is there any thing you want?"

"Nothing, nothing, but to be filled with divine love," replied she, grasping Mrs Kirke's hand firmly in both of hers, and raising aloft her eyes, which were fixed and sightless; but Mrs Kirke did not perceive that she was blind. But the change in all

respects, in her appearance and in her speech, was so striking, that she became alarmed, and, gently withdrawing her hand from hers, she hastened to the closet where the nurse was lying, and roused her, and begged her to go and awake Miss Stirling and Mr Gowans, and tell them that an alarming change had taken place within the last two hours. The woman, who had just lain down in her clothes started up in an instant, and hurrying down stairs entered the chamber of Mr Gowans, without waiting to knock at the door. But she stopped short at the threshold, when she saw there was still a light in the room, and that he was not yet in bed. A night lamp was burning on the table, and a book lay open beside it, and he at a little distance was on his knees, with his head bent down on the chair at which he knelt, deeply engaged in prayer.

He started up on the woman's entrance. There was no time for apologies.

"Come up, sir," said the nurse eagerly; "she is worse."

Mr Gowans hastened up stairs. Mrs Kirke, on his entering the room, waved to him with her hand indicating that she was quiet. He approached softly and she appeared to have fallen into a gentle slumber. Mrs Kirke and he sat down, and did not so much as utter a whisper for fear of disturbing her. But her sleep was of very brief continuance. A few minutes had only passed away, when she awoke with a start, and exclaimed, "Mrs Kirke, tell me when it is two o'clock."

"Yes, love," said Mrs Kirke, and she had scarcely spoken when the house-clock down stairs in the

lobby struck two. Margaret, however, did not seem to hear it, for after a short pause she again said, "Mrs Kirke remember to tell me when it is two o'clock."

"Yes, dearest," said Mrs Kirke, "why should you like to know?"

"Because," replied she, "two o'clock will be the last." And she continued to speak, uttering some disjointed sentences. Then she added with unbroken speech, and as if she had recovered momentarily her wonted tone of voice, "I have been dreaming that I was at Ingliston, in the paved court behind the house, and I was picking up with my fingers the grass that grows betwixt the stones, and Blair, our old coachman, came to me, and said, your task will be done at two o'clock."

Miss Stirling, who had just then, in her night dress, with a shawl thrown over her, come into the room, followed by the nurse, whispered to her nephew, "We had better send for the doctor."

"No," said Margaret, "do not send. The hour, the hour has at last come, and these limbs are ready for the grave. Oh, raise me up," cried she suddenly, making an effort to raise herself up. Mr Gowans raised her, and Miss Stirling placed pillows behind, as a support. She then said, "Where are you, Mr Gowans, for I do not see?"

"Here, dearest," said Mr Gowans, and he pressed his lips upon her spotless forehead.

"And Miss Stirling, and Mrs Kirke, are you all there?" she added; "give me your hands."

"Here we are dear," said Miss Stirling; "we are all here, and we will never leave you."

"I have been a sufferer," said Margaret, "but my soul might not have been safe without it; and, Oh, it is glory! glory, now! yes, it is all glory!"

A short interval followed, during which Mrs Kirke put a tea-spoonful of wine and water to her lips, which having swallowed, she said, "Give me more." Mrs Kirke gave her a little more, and she asked to have the cup in her own hand that she might take it herself. The cordial seemed to revive her, and her lips moved for a short time, as if in prayer, but what she said was not audible; at length she cried out, "Remember I have said it, great blessings will attend you all. I have prayed for it."

She again remained still for some moments, then sighing deeply, she cried, "Mrs Kirke."

"Yes, love," said Mrs Kirke.

"Will you come with me, dear Mrs Kirke."

"Yes, dear," said Mrs Kirke, "we will all come with you."

"And dear, dear Mr Gowans," added she, putting out her hand to him and grasping *his*. "Oh, the blessedness, the honour, and the glory of a godly life, and yours is that. Dear Mr Gowans, *you* will lay my head in the grave."

Mr Gowans was unable to articulate a syllable, but he kissed her, and the silent tears flowed down from his eyes.

"The angel of peace is in this house," said she, solemnly raising her hand, as if uttering a prophetic benediction; "Great blessings will be yours; remember I have said it." She then exclaimed, as if her mind was suddenly soaring from earth to heaven, "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints. That will be a glorious day!"

The nurse, who stood by, sobbed so loud, that she had to leave the room for fear of disturbing her. Another interval of solemn silence followed; but her lips were seen to move, and her sightless eyes, which were now darkened for ever to all sublunary things, were raised to the roof of the bed.

At last she said in a broken voice, "Where is this now! Am I still with you?"

Mr Gowans gently pressed her hand, which he held in his, but he could not speak.

Miss Stirling soothingly said, "We are all with you, dearest creature. Be not afraid."

"And the angel of the Everlasting Covenant is with you, and that is far better," said Mrs Kirke.

"The Angel of the Covenant," said Margaret, "and the Rock of Ages," a slight convulsive struggle prevented her from saying more. She gasped as if it were the last effort of life. Mr Gowans held her up, while his own heart and strength were almost failing him. A rushing sound was in his ears, and the perspiration stood out upon his brow. He uttered a deep, heavy sigh to relieve the oppression at his heart, and he mentally offered up an earnest prayer, supplicating the divine presence.

Meanwhile Margaret sunk again for a short space into perfect tranquillity, and they all stood watching the closed eyes and the motionless features, and, oh! she was a beautiful sight to look upon—a saint perfected for glory. They thought she had ceased to breathe, but suddenly starting, she extended her hand, and cried, "Mrs Kirke, where am I now?"

Mrs Kirke replied, while she took her hand, "You are with your Redeemer, and you are happy."

"And so I am, and so I am," repeated she in a sort of singing, triumphant, quivering voice, and immediately her under jaw fell down and remained fixed.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow,
No bloodless malady impales their face,
No age drops on their hairs his silver snow,
No nakedness their bodies doth embase,
No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace,
No fear of death the joy of life devours,
No unchaste sleep their precious time deflowers,
No loss, no grief, no change, wait on their winged hours."

GILES FLETCHER.

The day appointed for the funeral came. A large company of gentlemen were assembled on the occasion.

Mrs Kirke, Miss Stirling, and Miss Woodburn, the only females present, remained in the bed-chamber with the corpse. Not a word was uttered by any of the three. They sat in silence weeping till the undertaker's men came up to finish their work. They then kissed for the last time the pale lips and paler brow of the deceased, and Mrs Kirke, who was the most composed of the three, took from a small pocket-book, which she had in her bosom, the little lock of hair belonging to Charles Weirham, which she had preserved, but she had never made known to Margaret that she had it in her possession.

"This," said Mrs Kirke, "I know was precious to her, and it shall go with her to the grave;" and while she spoke she opened up the shroud and laid

the relic next to that cold bosom that once had beat with all the best affections of life, nay, more, in which had been implanted all the heavenly dispositions of a renewed heart. And now the silent nails were fastened in, and all of Margaret Inglis that was sown in corruption was hid from mortal sight, till it should be raised in incorruptible glory at that day which she rejoiced to anticipate, when the Lord shall come with ten thousand of his saints.

The funeral train moved on in solemn procession, Mr Gowans bearing the head, and Mr Hume the right shoulder. Mr Gowans's own clergyman, who had officiated in giving a prayer on the occasion, together with Dr Wardrobe, Bailie Mundell, and one or two others appointed by Mr Gowans, were the other pall-bearers.

She was laid to rest in the family burying-ground of Mr Gowans, beside his father and mother. Thus did the Lord, according to her faith, prepare a place to receive her bones.

On the following Sabbath a remarkable sermon on death was delivered from the pulpit, and in it all the virtues of the deceased were portrayed. The congregation knew not to whom the preacher alluded, except those persons more immediately connected with the family of Mr Gowans, and many genuine tears were shed as a tribute to the unknown departed believer, whose high attainments in the divine life were so eloquently set forth by the man of God.

CHAPTER XL.

"If the Lord sees the marriage state best for you, he has the proper person already in his eye, and though she were in Peru or Nova-Zembla, he knows how to bring you together."

J. NEWTON.

A few weeks after this event, when the household of Mr Gowans was again settled down in the usual routine of life and business, Mr Gowans was struck with an advertisement in an Edinburgh newspaper, in which it was intimated, that if Miss Margaret Inglis, of the parish of Greenmill, in the county of —, and sometime resident at the mansion of Ingliston, in —shire, would apply either personally or by letter at the office of a writer which was specified in Edinburgh, or at the office of —, solicitor, Philpot Lane, London, it would greatly oblige the advertiser. It remained for Mr Gowans to write immediately to the Edinburgh agent, and intimate that Miss Inglis had died in his house. And he also stated, that if any particulars were required, application might be made to him. Time passed on. No notice was ever taken of Mr Gowans's letter, and the circumstance at length, if it could not be forgotten, at least ceased to be thought of.

In the course of two years after, the household of Mr Gowans, of which Mrs Kirke till the day of her death formed a member, had a mistress added to it, who was eminently calculated to increase its happiness. Henrietta Woodburn, whose aunt was now dead, was in every way fitted to render Mr Gowans happy, and her he selected, and there were all the

concomitants necessary to a felicitous union — “grace, competence, and mutual affection.” When they had gone to visit some friends on their marriage jaunt, Miss Stirling, who was left at home to preside over the establishment, was surprised one day by being particularly inquired for by a gentleman, who had arrived in a private travelling carriage.

The gentleman, on calling on Mr Gowans and finding him from home, had asked to see any one of the family. He informed Miss Stirling that he had come on the part of the advertiser for Miss Inglis, and being informed of her decease, he had been directed to the house of Mr Gowans to learn all the particulars. Miss Stirling gave him every information as minutely as she could, and, as she informed her nephew on his return, the stranger seemed deeply affected, and asked more than once particularly where she was buried. He was so anxious in many of his other inquiries regarding her, that she was sorry afterwards that she had not sent for Mrs Kirke to answer some questions she could not answer satisfactorily. But his stay was very brief, and he hurried abruptly away, without either leaving his name, or saying he would call again.

This gentleman's visit was a circumstance of much conjecture to Mrs Kirke. Her real opinion was that he was some early lover. But this was a conjecture she kept to herself, nor would she have ventured to mention this to Mr Gowans, who, she soon saw, had had a more than common friendship for the deceased.

The business of Mr Gowans was daily increasing, as also his respectability and importance in society. He was beloved and looked up to by all who knew

him. His own family circle was a pattern of domestic harmony, and to them time passed pleasantly and profitably away.

CHAPTER XLI.

“There is something marvellously restorative in a good conscience.”

There is a sort of Highland cousinship or connection between every body in all the various grades of society—a link which unites all, from the highest to the lowest.

There was advertised in the Edinburgh newspapers for private sale a splendid London-built equipage, which had scarcely ever been used, and which the maker professed he would sell at an immense sacrifice to any purchaser who would come forward in the course of a week, during which time the carriage was to be seen at the livery stables of Mrs S——, St James's Place, Edinburgh, but after a certain date of the current month it was to be removed to the builder's own premises in London. The consequential Bailie Mundell of Glasgow, and the haughty Countess of G——, two great people in their way, but as dissimilar to each other in every respect as any two civilized mortals could well be, may be considered to have had established between them, by means of the above advertisement, a bond of connection equal at least to the relationship which subsisted between the descendants of the man that slaughtered the cattle, and the descendants of his neighbour who stole them.

The Countess was a very extravagant woman, and the Bailie was a very careful man. The Countess,

not satisfied with any thing manufactured in Scotland, had commissioned a coach from London, which her husband, the Earl, would not pay for. This superb equipage she was allowed to keep for twelve months, but the coach-maker being refused payment, ordered the carriage to be returned, but, before having it brought back to London, he made an offer of it for sale on the most liberal terms to the Scottish gentry.

Bailie Mundell, who was looking out for an article in that line, started up as a purchaser. In his most ambitious reveries, he had contemplated nothing more than making himself proprietor of a plain comfortable vehicle that would carry himself, his wife, and his daughter to church on a wet day, which might on an average be almost every Sunday of the year in Glasgow; but the Countess's equipage, magnificent as it was, and capable of accommodating more than his own family, came across him as a dead bargain not to be resisted.

The Bailie, in the joy of his heart, eager to make trial of his purchase, got into the vehicle with all speed, and posted homewards, and made a triumphal entry into his native city, having passed for a lord, and sometimes for a duke all the way, being well lorded and graced by the waiters and toll-keepers with whom he happened to hold communication on the road.

Ambition is soon kindled. This intoxicating progress of Bailie Mundell from Edinburgh to Glasgow, when honour unsought seemed to attend his steps, roused up ideas in his mind which, but for this, would for ever have lain dormant. He had long contemplated purchasing a country-seat down

about Clyde side. Perhaps a plain house, with a few acres of pleasure ground, and an orchard, and a field or so for farming, and pasturage for a cow. But the day after his arrival at home with his equipage, and when he was in a very fever of excitement about making bargains, his eye lighted on the following advertisement :—

ESTATE FOR SALE.

To be exposed for sale by public roup, within the Royal Exchange, Edinburgh, upon Wednesday, the 16th day of September next, 18—, at two o'clock afternoon, unless previously disposed of by private bargain,

THE ESTATE OF INGLISTON, in the parish of Cultimuir, and county of ———, &c., &c., &c.

Here followed a whole column, giving a full detail of the quality of the soil, the extent of the estate, and all the valuable considerations which rendered it an eligible purchase.

Every word of the lengthened paragraph spoke home to the bailie's heart, and the winding-up clause, which asserted that if any gentleman of taste wished for a residence combining all the advantages above described, he never could have such another opportunity of making such a desirable purchase, or of laying out his money with greater certainty of profit, settled the thing at once. The bailie was determined to be the man of taste who was to make the purchase, and forthwith he summoned in counsel his legal friend Mr Gowans, and a land valuator Mr Dickie ; and it was agreed upon that the three should set off without delay to inspect the place and

close the bargain before any other competitor should appear.

The sole representative of Bailie Mundell's family was Miss Jane Mundell, his only child, a young lady of excellent sense and considerable personal attractions, and as all the bailie's ambition was on her account, he naturally wished her opinion of the property he was to purchase as an heirdom for her. Miss Mundell consented to her father's proposal of accompanying him on his enterprise, and, as there was no time to lose, the party set out in Bailie Mundell's coach. So many important matters had been upon the *tapis* that there had been no time to consider about getting the armorial bearings of the Earl and Countess of G—— effaced from the panels of the carriage, and the bailie's coat of arms substituted in their place ; and Bailie Mundell was under the necessity of enacting over again the character of a peer, for Mr Gowans was too diffident for a lord, and Mr Dickie was too familiarly forward, at least so it had appeared to those excellent discerners of rank and character, the functionaries at the public houses of entertainment at which they had to halt, and the palm of nobility was, by unanimous consent, awarded to Bailie Mundell. This was a rich joke for the bailie's friend and adviser Mr Dickie, who kept it up with great effect. He my-lorded the bailie as loudly as he could to let himself be heard, and he my-ladied Miss Mundell, till she blushed at the imposition that was practising upon the landlord and waiters. But Bailie Mundell was made to pay sweepingly for his honours by the exorbitant charges which were made upon the party at every place where they took refreshments or

changed horses ; and he was very glad when he and his small travelling suite arrived at the end of their journey.

" Could any thing surpass this in beauty and splendour," said Bailie Mundell, as they drove up the Ingliston avenue, and he already felt himself proprietor of the place.

" Nothing, indeed," said Miss Mundell. " It is almost too magnificent for any but a nobleman to purchase."

" Why, if I can pay the money for it," rejoined the bailie, " I have as good a right as a nobleman to buy it. Have I not?"

His daughter acquiesced and desisted from the argument, but still it appeared to her a possession far beyond what her most ambitious hopes could ever aspire to.

On their arrival, they found in the house two attorneys, viz. Mr Spinks junior, and Mr Cook, from the firm of Sparrow, Spinks, and Sharpey, late Draper and Sparrow, Austin Friars, London, and a writer from the town of K——, to draw up the papers, according to the forms of the Scottish law. These men were acting for the creditors of Sir James Hay Inglis, who had seized upon the estate. Sir Archibald had been dead for some time, and his son and successor soon became a ruined man.

What the feelings of Mr Gowans were upon this occasion may be easily imagined, and it would be superfluous to delineate them. There were early recollections associated with that place which still haunted him. But why, he thought to himself, should *he* care about the fate of Ingliston ? It was nothing, absolutely nothing, to him now. He had

long ceased to have any concern there, and he had never expected to set foot within its halls again. Much as he respected Bailie Mundell as a fellow-citizen, yet he could not wish him to be the possessor of Ingliston ; and this could not arise from envy or jealousy, nay, the very reverse of these feelings actuated him, and he was conscious that his feelings were contrary to his own self-interest, for he knew that if Bailie Mundell became lord of that domain, he would be reinstated in the lucrative appointment which he once held as factor.

The English attorneys named the sum expected for the property. Bailie Mundell named the highest sum he would give, and which Mr Dickie, the land-valuator, declared to be the utmost that it was worth. Mr Cook, of the firm of Sparrow, Spinks, and Sharpey shook his head, and said that it would not do. The bailie was resolute in keeping to his price, and Dickie urged him to maintain his firmness, for these English lawyers would fleece him if they could.

Mr Cook said they would rather let it be put to the hammer, and see what it would bring, or sell it in lots to suit different purchasers, upon which the other attorney, Mr Spinks junior, interposed.

Mr Spinks junior, one of the principals of the firm, was a prime young man, in fine condition, plump and fair, with a round, full throat and double chin, exposed for public inspection at his open shirt collar. The cuffs of his coat were turned up, displaying the fine linen which garnished the wrists ; and two hands like shoulders of Sheppey mutton, with a slight fringe of fair brown hair on the knuckles, and a stout gold ring on the little finger of the left hand, were raised to demonstrate as he spoke.

"Gentlemen," said he, "there is no use to debate about the matter;" and he went on to assure them that they already had had an offer from a gentleman, upon the security of an English nobleman, and the sum which he proposed exceeded by L.5000 that which Bailie Mundell offered, and they had written an acceptance of it. All this seemed very odd to Bailie Mundell, who was a plain straight-forward person, and he marvelled why they did not tell him at first that they were in terms with another; and it looked to him nothing else than mere quirks and quibbles to get him to come down with a larger sum at once, and he retired to consult in private with his two friends. Mr Gowans advised him to give up the contest, for if they really had had the offer which Mr Spinks mentioned, and had agreed to it, they could not in honour draw back, and if they did, it would in all probability involve it in a law-plea. Mr Dickie was of opinion that the whole was a fabrication, and that there had been no offer of the kind made, and they would be glad enough to come to the bailie's terms at last, if he only remained firm; and the estate might stand long enough in the market, for it was not every body's penny-worth. Such was Mr Dickie's view of the matter.

The bailie was in great perplexity and trouble about all this. He had anticipated no difficulty or drawback. He thought the agents, without two thoughts about it, would clutch his money on the instant, and that he should seat himself in his possession as easily as he had seated himself in his coach, and have nothing to disturb his quiet but the honours that would press upon him on every

side. The bailie's extreme eagerness about the bargain was not unobserved by the sharp-sighted lawyers, Messrs Spinks and Cook, and this they determined to turn to the best account.

Mr Cook, from his observation on the characters of the strangers, judged that Mr Dickie was the most likely of the party to meet their views. He accordingly watched for a private opportunity of conversing with him, and after sounding him, and discovering that he was not of a nature so sensitive as to be startled at what he might propose, he assured him it was a fact that they had the said offer for the estate, as Mr Spinks had informed them, and that the sum being equal to any they might look for, they had agreed to take it; but nothing as yet had been formally done, and they could draw back upon some pretext of the sale being necessarily postponed without involving themselves in any penalty for breach of agreement, if Mr Dickie would persuade Bailie Mundell to agree to give a sum above that offered by the other gentleman, of sufficient consideration to warrant their breaking with *him*; and if Mr Dickie could effect this, he, Mr Cook, would take it upon himself to guarantee to Mr Dickie a douceur of L.500 to himself of the purchase money. Mr Dickie faced his friend Bailie Mundell on the following day with a new light upon the subject. He skilfully guarded against appearing to change his mind too suddenly; but, as he had been prosecuting his survey of the grounds, the value of the place very naturally rose in his estimation, and he could not help saying to the bailie that it would be a sad blunder after all to lose such a place for the sake of a few additional thousands.

"Do you really think so," said the bailie starting up and coming forward, his features perfectly relaxed from the chagrin and anxiety into which they had been screwed up the moment before; "do you really think so," he repeated, and he looked and felt like one who wanted only the concurrence of some one to make him rush to do a deed which he would afterwards repent for life. "What say you, Mr Gowans?" added he.

"I can give no farther opinion on the subject," said Mr Gowans, who already had had a strong debate with him before Dickie came in.

Mr Dickie then brought in his strong reasons why the Bailie should venture more than he had first offered. The new veins of coal which might be opened in the remote parts of the property, and the thinnings of the wood in the near vicinity of the house, would make a complete return in a very few years.

This was satisfactory reasoning, no doubt; but the bailie could not get quit of certain scruples which haunted him about the moral impropriety,—setting aside the legal dispute,—which it might involve, of outbidding, in a private transaction, another purchaser, whose offer had been accepted.

Miss Mundell stepped in at this juncture. She had all along taken no part in the making of the purchase. She had been so completely occupied in surveying the place of which she was to be the future mistress, and the scenery was altogether something so new to her, that she became perfectly enchanted with the prospect of residing there. Bailie Mundell, who had a great respect for his daughter, referred the case to her, and stated his perfect wil-

lingness, for her sake, to give any price the agents would accept of above what the other person had offered.

“ You may, if you please, father, buy it under these circumstances ; and I have no right to object,” said Miss Mundell. “ But, do not purchase it for *me* or on *my* account ; for I would rather live and die in one of the meanest, miserable huts,—such as I see some of the colliers occupying on the muirs,—than I would live in this house, or rather palace, and have the wretched feeling that it was purchased by dishonourable means. I could not expect a blessing to attend me if I agreed to it.”

This decided the matter. The bailie, with unanimous resolution, determined to abide by his daughter’s opinion, which, he declared, agreed exactly with his own sentiments. They forthwith prepared to depart, the bailie with the look of one who has been suddenly relieved from some excruciating pain which had contracted and distorted his features, seemed perfectly a new creature ; and he skipped with the agility of a youth into his carriage, free from the intolerable weight of the guilty transaction into which his vanity had almost involved him.

Bailie Mundell’s zeal for purchases was somewhat cooled for a time, and he and his friends returned to Glasgow, and, in the prosecution of their several callings, soon forgot Ingliston and their fruitless journey thither. Mr Gowans alone, from early associations, was more interested in the fate of that property than any of the others, and he was anxious to learn how it was disposed of.

The fate of Ingliston was altogether a subject on

which the moralist might say much ; but the reader may be left to make for himself the reflections which may naturally arise in contemplating its past history.

It is only to be deeply regretted that the domestic events in the family of the Inglishes now recorded are no romance, and are but too common in life ; and such will continue to be the destiny of families and of properties as long as society is constituted as it is, and that will be till the end of the chapter. They who dream of things being better by man's wisdom deceive themselves. Selfish men in public life are the deadly evil of which the community have to complain ; and, in private life, selfish women and weak-minded men are continually making sad wrecks of human happiness ; and while many who deserve a better fate are allowed to starve, then comes the "*dignior hæres*," and squanders the unblest wealth.

CHAPTER XLII.

" Let high birth triumph ! What can be more great ?
Nothing—but MERIT."

SOMERVILLE.

" — One man in his time plays many parts."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

One summer evening, a travelling party of distinction from England arrived in Glasgow, and took up their quarters at the — hotel ; and forthwith the hotel-keeper, to give some eclat to his establishment, which was a new one, had the arrival announced in a flashy paragraph which intimated to his fellow-citizens the names and rank of his guests, to-wit,—Colonel Dempster, Lady Anne Dempster,

family and suite, and the Honourable and Reverend Holt Newenham. The worthy promulgator of this interesting news also stated, for the farther information of the good people of the town, something of the family connections of this distinguished party. And, by way of adding to the dignity of the honourable and reverend gentleman in particular, he stated *whose* son and *whose* nephew he was, which, in reality, was implying that he was not eminent in his own individual self, when this explanation was necessary to let people know why he claimed attention. But the master of the inn did not view things in an abstract way.

The Glasgow public were not very much edified nor elated with the intelligence that a colonel this, and a lady that, and a reverend the-other-thing, with all their derivative honours, as belonging to Earl somebody, and to General something-else, who had been fighting his country's battles, had taken up their residence for a day in their good town; nor did it, either directly or indirectly, seem in any degree to affect the interests of any one of them. Mr Gowans, however, was much surprised at receiving a message next morning from this distinguished party, requesting to see him at the hotel.

When he went, he was received in a public room by a fine military man, of middle stature, slightly embrowned in his complexion from foreign climates, and an honourable scar was on his left temple, extending down to the side of his face, which, however, did not disfigure him, but tended rather to increase the interest of his appearance; at least, it did so in the eyes of Mr Gowans, who felt a strong prepossession in his favour, which he had seldom felt before

for a person at first sight. This stranger, who received him with great politeness, and even affability, ushered him into an interior apartment, where he introduced him to his wife Lady Anne Dempster, and a clerical friend Mr Newenham.

This honourable and reverend gentleman, to whom the innkeeper had done the injustice to puff off on account of his derived honours as if he had been in himself a *nobody*, was in reality a very eminent person. He was, both in talent and goodness, all that a clergyman should be, and his appearance bespoke him such.

Some forenoon refreshments had just been ordered up, and Lady Anne, who seemed to be one of those very delightful specimens of female excellence which, accompanied with great personal beauty, constitutes what, humanly speaking, one may venture to call a perfect being, invited Mr Gowans to join them at lunch.

While Mr Gowans, who could not conjecture what he had been sent for, was wondering in his own mind what all this kindness could mean from entire strangers, Colonel Dempster announced himself to be the purchaser of the estate of Ingliston. He said that he had just been south to accompany his family thither; that he had been living at Ingliston by himself for some time, endeavouring to get things arranged and put in a proper train; but he found he could make but little progress without the advice and assistance of some one who understood those matters better than himself. He had been informed, he added, that Mr Gowans had formerly managed the affairs of that property. Mr Gowans bowed affirmatively. Colonel Dempster then said, that he

had sent for him to request that he would again enter upon his old office, and take charge of it ; and, as he would be happy to have the benefit of his advice as soon as possible, he begged that he would pay a visit to Ingliston as soon as he could, consistently with his other arrangements.

Mr Gowans was very much struck at this announcement. It seemed to him as if unsought blessings and honours were heaped upon him ; and he was the more astonished and gratified when, on rising to depart, Lady Anne said to him that it was her intention to call upon Mrs Gowans next day, before they proceeded on their journey, and she hoped, some time in the course of the summer, to have the pleasure of seeing her also at Ingliston.

On the following morning, between ten and eleven o'clock, a post-carriage arrived at the house of Mr Gowans, and Lady Anne Dempster and her brother Mr Newenham were announced.

Lady Anne apologised for so early a visit, but her anxiety to be introduced to Mrs Gowans before leaving Glasgow made her come without ceremony. Colonel Dempster, she said, had been detained behind by a gentleman who had called on business, and, on her return to the hotel, they were to set off immediately. Her stay was therefore not *fashionably*, but necessarily short ; but there was more genuine kindness in her words and in her manner during that short space than would have outweighed in value all the intercourse which takes place in a thousand heartless visits of ceremony.

She invited Mrs Gowans to accompany Mr Gowans to Ingliston on an early day, which she fixed in the following month. And the invitation was not

a general one, which is no invitation at all,—or, if any one is simple enough to avail himself of such, it is to sour looks, candle-ends, and scrap dinners,—but it was a particular and especial invitation, sincerely given, and earnestly wished to be complied with. And Mrs Gowans, who could not but feel gratified at the attention shewn her by this charming and distinguished stranger, agreed to the proposed visit, if health permitted.

In the mean time, Mr Gowans went on a professional visit to look into the state of the Colonel's affairs; after which he returned, and, on the day appointed by Lady Anne, he and his wife set out for Ingliston.

When Mr and Mrs Gowans arrived, they found preparations making for a grand entertainment which was to take place. Colonel Dempster had already been waited on by all the neighbouring gentry and invited to their houses, and he in his turn had asked them; and, on the same day appointed for receiving these guests, it was arranged that a fête should be given out of doors to the tenantry.

Among the numerous party met on this occasion, there were several who have already been introduced to the reader, viz. young Campbell of Westerfield and his wife,—late Miss Adelaide Weirham. There was Lord Weirham himself, who, since the decease of his lady, had retired to his estate in Scotland, where he lived in privacy, and devoted himself to the care and training of his little boy; and the circumstance of his youngest and favourite sister being settled near him was another inducement for his living at Weirham Castle. There also were present Mr Græme of Eaglesford, Colonel Gilbert, and

Miss Patricia Crabbe; which last was the only uninvited guest at the table. But she had forced herself upon the Campbells of Westerfield on their way thither, who were too good-natured to resist the intrusion.

Besides* these old acquaintances of the reader, there was a host of distinguished strangers,—distinguished, in every sense of the word, as all men and women are who assemble to a dinner, viz. distinguished fools and distinguished frights, with an occasional wise man and a passable physiognomy interspersed here and there to relieve the eye; distinguished talkers and distinguished mutes; distinguished sinners of every grade in the moral scale, who have incurred every guilt denounced in the decalogue, except, perhaps, that of common theft and that of murder: all of them being very reputable Christians in their way, such as the distinguished world is composed of.

CHAPTER XLIII.

“Honours best thrive,
When rather from our acts we them derive,
Than our foregoers.”

When dinner was over, Colonel Dempster proposed to go out, if agreeable to his guests, to drink the health of his tenants assembled at the entertainment prepared for them out of doors.

The company readily agreed to the proposal, and, as Lady Anne intimated her intention of going also if the ladies had no objections, the whole party, ex-

cept some old dowagers whom indolence and the oppressive heat rendered unfit for the exertion, prepared to go, notwithstanding that one of those matrons hinted to Lady Anne, that probably the festivities and hilarity of the out of door party would by that time be in that advanced stage which it is not decorous for ladies to countenance or witness. But Lady Anne assured the old lady that precautions had been used to insure that every thing should be conducted with propriety. Colonel Dempster made it always a rule in granting any indulgence of the kind to his dependents, to permit nothing that could border on excess ; and while every thing was furnished which the most liberal hospitality could devise, proper persons being appointed to regulate the whole, nothing was wanting which could administer to their comfort and gratification, within the bounds of soberness and decorum.

The ladies being provided with shawls and parasols to screen them from the bright evening sun, proceeded, each attended by a gentleman, to the place where the rural company were met. Colonel Dempster gave his arm to Lady Guthrie, who, though both old and infirm, as well as afflicted with lameness, was so fond of seeing people happy, that she would not remain behind, but went to smile upon them with her benevolent countenance. Colonel Gilbert selected Mrs Gowans, whom he had sat beside during dinner, and with whom he claimed the privilege of old acquaintance, on the grounds of having known her father when abroad. But Mrs Campbell of Westerfield, who observed his preference, remarked to her next neighbour that Colonel Gilbert had always a plea for selecting the handsomest

woman in the company as the object of his attentions, and that if Mrs Gowans had been a plain woman, it would quite have escaped his memory that he ever had *seen* her father.

The other gentlemen and ladies having arranged themselves according to chance or choice, Miss Patricia Crabbe, whose eyes and ears were drinking in, with greedy eagerness, all that was passing, fell to the lot of Mr Gowans, who was never very forward in his pretensions on these occasions.

Colonel Dempster and his charge got rather in the rear, from the lame lady's inability to walk fast, and Lady Anne leaning on the arm of Lord Weirham headed the party, and led the way to where there was a large temporary erection covered with canvass, on a lawn down near the river, the side towards the water being left open to give the company the benefit of the refreshing breeze, as well as of the fine view.

Under this pavilion, about two hundred persons, men and women, had sat down to a magnificent feast, which was now over, and some lighter refreshments, together with wines, fruits, &c. were placed upon the table.

When the ladies and gentlemen approached, they heard the sound of vocal music, and they stood for a while unseen to listen, and also to give Colonel Dempster and his companion time to come up. The vocalist was a young gentleman, by profession a carpenter, who had a fine voice, and was favouring the company with "Auld lang syne," in a style which would have drawn admiration from a more scientific audience. And he had come to the verse, "And there's a hand my trusty feire," &c., and they

had all got up on their feet, and were in the act of joining hands in a circle round the table, when the entrance of their distinguished visitors stopped the performance.

"Go on my friends, go on," cried Colonel Dempster, pushing forward, and having squeezed into the circle, he crossed his hands, giving his right to a strapping amazon who was more than a head taller than himself, and his left to the overseer of the collieries, and with hearty good will he joined in the loud chorus which followed.

When this was over, room was made for him and his lady, and some others, at the upper end of the table, and the rest of the ladies and gentlemen found accommodation where they best could at different parts of the board, and partook of the ample desert of fine fruits which was before them.

Colonel Dempster's and Lady Anne Dempster's health was drunk with all the honours. Returning of thanks and speeches followed, and several loyal toasts which need not be particularly recorded. After all these preliminaries were over, Colonel Dempster rose, and thus addressed the company:—

"My dear friends," said he, "I beg to propose a toast in which, I am sure, you will most cordially join. But, before doing so, there is an announcement which I wish to make in presence of you all. I do not mean to preface it with a speech, for I am no orator. But although I do not enlarge on the satisfaction and sincere pleasure which I feel on this occasion, do not think I am indifferent because of my inability to express it as I would wish, or you might expect. You are all met here under the auspices of one whose great desire is to make you

happy. One who feels, as God knows I do, earnestly solicitous for your welfare, and for your best interests. And if I forbear to make many professions, or indeed any promise whatever, it is not because I am the less anxious to acquit myself conscientiously towards you in that relation in which, by the providence of Heaven, I am now placed in regard to you.

"The toast I would propose is one which, I daresay, must recall to most of those present many old and interesting associations. I give the memory of an individual respected by you all. I give the memory of your former landlord—Sir Norman Inglis. But before proceeding to drink to it, I have to announce a fact which I wish no longer to conceal. I, who now address you, am his son."

A hush of silent astonishment thrilled through the company. Some made a misplaced effort to applaud, when Colonel Dempster, with a tone and manner which made them desist, and imposed perfect silence, solemnly pronounced, while he raised his own glass to his lips, "The memory of Sir Norman Inglis."

The whole company rose and followed his example, then resuming their seats, another pause ensued. At length a voice tremulous and quivering broke in upon the silence. The feeble effort to speak issued from the lower end of the table, and the attention of the company was directed thither towards the aged figure of a shrivelled old man with a few thin locks as white as snow, who stood up and addressed them in the following manner:—

"Honoured gentlemen and ladies," said he, "a puir, frail, feeble creature, wha will very soon cease

to sojourn here, the time of my rest from labour being doubtless nigh at hand, makes bold to address a few words to this honourable company, my age, as it were, giving me this privilege, and it must be my apology for speaking in presence of your honours.

“ But there is another solemn testimony of respect for another individual now departed this life, that I would humbly wish ye to make, now that ye are assembled thegither, and especially after such a wonderfu’ discovery as has just been made, which has struck a’ the company, as it weel micht, dumb wi’ astonishment.

“ There ance was ane that dwelt in this place, and gae’d in and out amang us in the beauty and innocence of youth. She was as light to our eyes when she used to gang by, and joy to our hearts. Nobility was seen stampit on her face and form. And what is far better, the lineaments of a nobler nature than any of this earth have been impressed upon her soul. She passed away from us in sorrow, as in a summer cloud. But I aye thought there was light within and behind the cloud that darkened her, and overshadowed her path. But He that rules over all saw different, and as a worthy gentleman and siccar freen o’ the true house o’ Ingliston, now in company, informs me, she is gane to where there is nae overshadowing of darkness, nae storms, nae thing that can tarnish the bright light that shines there ; and she is now adopted into the royal family and priesthood of Heaven above, where she reigns with Him who is God over all blessed for evermore, to which glorious company we hope all to be united ; and though she walked in the robes of virgin purity

on earth, they were nothing to be compared to the dazzling whiteness of those robes of the Redeemer's righteousness with which she is now invested.

"I now beg leave to propose to this honourable company, The memory of Miss Margaret Inglis."

A solemn, silent pause ensued. No one attempted to reply. Tears flowed copiously down from the eyes of Lady Anne Dempster, and tears came to the eyes of many more who were present. Colonel Dempster's lips quivered, and he compressed them together to hide their trembling. A deep, melancholy sigh was heard to break the stillness, and this sigh burst from one whose heart was overcharged with a blighting sorrow, which already had had an effect which was but too visible upon his whole appearance. The eyes of many of the company were by this attracted to Lord Weirham, who seemed overcome with trepidation, while he raised the wine slowly and unsteadily to his lips. Mr Graeme of Eaglesford, at this moment of painful and evident embarrassment, rose up and drew the attention of the company towards himself while he thus spoke:

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "I have with sentiments of the sincerest respect united in those tributes now expressed to the memory of departed worth. But it seems to me, and I would humbly offer my sentiments and feelings on the subject, that this occasion of our meeting together is one undoubtedly of festivity and rejoicing, and I know that, could Sir Norman have looked forward to such a meeting as this under such circumstances, his benevolent heart would have overflowed with delight. As for the sainted being to whom our vene-

rable friend, who last spoke, has referred, I had not the privilege of knowing her, but according to the character which she bears, I am certain, that were it possible for her to witness us now met together, she would rather encourage the innocent smiles of heartfelt joy for all our present blessings, than selfishly seek to call forth tears to her own spotless memory. I therefore advance a proposition which none can gainsay; I affirm that this is an occasion of national congratulation, as well as of domestic joy.

“None of you needs be put in remembrance of events which are yet fresh in your minds—events which will adorn hereafter the annals of our country. You have all known his fame by public report, and you have all glowed with feelings of patriotic zeal and admiration when you read of the gallant officer who was foremost to maintain our possessions in British India. You have all honoured him in your hearts as the assertor of England’s conquests, when, by the side of that noble commander, General Newenham, the distinguished uncle of Lady Anne Dempster, he rushed into the hottest of the battle, and maintained the fierce combat against savage tyranny and despotism, and his country longed to lay a boon at his feet. I myself would have counted it a privilege to have cast my eyes upon him—to have had him pointed out to me even at a distance. Personal acquaintance with him was an honour which I never so much as contemplated. It was far beyond my anticipation, and England I thought enviable in having given birth to such a son. But, a short time ago, when it was rumoured that this hero had turned his eyes wistfully towards

our barren hills, and contemplated pitching his tent among us, how did our hearts, for I speak the sentiments of all the surrounding gentry—sentiments to which those of them who are now present can respond, how, I say, did our hearts glow with delight at the prospect of having such a distinguished neighbour! And now that he is domiciliated among us, and we have partaken of his magnificent hospitality, and, what is far more, may count upon his friendship, and he has told us out of his own mouth that England, whom I used to envy for that, gave him not birth, but that he is one of our very selves, does the disclosure not come upon us all with the overwhelming power of some mighty discovery, which ensures to us a glorious possession we had not the happiness of knowing belonged to us before! It is like the discovery the man of science makes, which crowns the labours of his life; nay, more, it is like that of the doubting spirit, who, on quitting the earth, fearful of its destination, finds itself safely landed in the bright and blissful regions of eternal enjoyment.

“And now our hero himself is retired like a warrior from the field of slaughter and bloodshed, triumphing amid his spoils, and he is set down in the halls of his forefathers, purchased by the sweat of his brow and the energies of his life; and, behold, among the trophies of this conqueror, the most glorious of them all,—one of the fairest, loveliest daughters of England, seated like a queen, nay, more—like a ministering angel of beauty and of goodness at his side!”

Here a tremendous burst of applause broke in upon Mr Graeme's speech. The acclamations con-

tinued loud and long, and he did not attempt to resume it. New speakers rose up and expressed themselves with an enthusiasm which he had kindled. The current of feeling changed from sad to joyous throughout the company, and there thrilled through them all, as each speaker's glowing sentiments burst forth, that exhilaration of heart which could not fail to be inspired on such an occasion and under such remarkable circumstances. If there was one among them whose misgiving heart still bled, and whose countenance amid the universal joy was scarce enlivened by a smile, and who took the earliest opportunity of slipping away unnoticed, to indulge in private in his own reflections, it did not damp their happiness, for every one was so pleased with his own individual share in the entertainment that he did not observe it. Far less could what was passing in the mind of Miss Patricia Crabbe mar any body's pleasure.

To her the new English proprietor and his lady had appeared personages of transcendent and imposing grandeur, but now she sat, with a pair of cat's eyes directed towards the upper end of the table, trying to discover some flaw in the demeanour of the noble son of poor Jean Dempster.

CHAPTER XLIV.

“ Then is there mirth in heaven,
When earthly things made even,
Attune together.”

“ Stop, Master Adolphus, don't go there, or I shall tell your uncle,” cried an English nurse, in a high tone of command, to an unruly little fellow of three years of age, whose mischievous gambols among shrubs and flowers in front of the house, she was endeavouring to put a stop to by her threats. But it was all in vain; Master Adolphus was not to be talked into order, and she could do nothing more than talk to him, for her hands were fully occupied with a beautiful baby of six months old, which she was carrying, and who, terrified at the threatening tones of her voice, addressed to its delinquent brother, was crying with all its might. This was before breakfast, on the morning after the grand entertainment, and several of the gentlemen who had remained all night, were already out, strolling about in different parties among the shrubberies, to enjoy the fresh air. All the ladies were as yet at their toilets, except Mrs Gowans, who had been out walking for some time, and she was just returning to the house, when the nurse's unavailing remonstrances attracted her notice.

Mrs Gowans came up to the woman, and offered to take the baby, that she might be at liberty to go after Master Adolphus, and prevent his mischief. “ She is not in good humour, ma'am,” said the nurse; “ I fear she wo'nt come to you. She is

sleepy and hungry, I must take her to her mama. But really Master Adolphus has become quite unmanageable since we came here. His own maid has no control over him, and he minds nobody but his uncle Holt. Master Adolphus, do you hear?" again screamed the nurse.

"Halloo!" shouted Master Adolphus, while he scampered over the newly dressed flower-borders in his chace of a tame pigeon, which walked and flew short distances, skimming along the ground as he approached, but at last it baffled his pursuit and flew off; and he, as if in malicious glee at the disappointment, wrenched off the heads of some choice carnations, and held them aloft in his fists, and laughed till the air rung with his infant mirth. "Here," cried Colonel Dempster, who, together with some of the other gentlemen, just then came in sight; "Here, somebody look after Dolph. The little scamp is doing mischief."

Mrs Gowans, taking the baby in her arms, while the nurse ran to lay hold of the young trespasser, hastened into the house, with her fretful little charge, and entering the dressing-room of Lady Anne Dempster; "Here, Lady Anne," said she, "is a very importunate petitioner, whom *I* cannot pacify." And Lady Anne took the little creature, and it cried still more mightily, till its head was fairly nestled in its mother's bosom, and then with a sort of triumphant smile, it looked roguishly up from the corner of its eye in the face of Mrs Gowans.

Meantime, Colonel Gilbert, who had been sauntering about with the other gentlemen, followed Mr Gowans up and down wherever he went, till at length at a turn of the road, he got him apart from the

rest, and, unobserved, intimated to him that he wished to have an opportunity of speaking with him. Mr Gowans, accordingly, lingered behind with him, and when the others were out of sight, the Colonel thus began.

"Mr Gowans," said he, "it is many years since you and I first met."

Mr Gowans bowed in acquiescence.

"It seems to me," said Colonel Gilbert, "that I have to ask your forgiveness for my insulting you on that occasion."

"You do me an injury," replied Mr Gowans modestly, "if you think I ever close my eyes in sleep without having forgiven the whole world, if any one have done me wrong. So all that you allude to must be forgiven and forgotten long ago," added he, with a smile.

"That may be," resumed the Colonel, "and *you* may be satisfied, but *I* am not. I ought to make some reparation."

"Do not mention it," said Mr Gowans, who had not yet forgotten how to blush, and the colour mounting to his face, betrayed those feelings which he could not hide; "you pain me by recurring to that event."

"Well," replied Colonel Gilbert, "I shall not dwell upon that subject. But I *must* feel that I owe you something, and, Heaven knows, there are few people in this world whose good opinion is worth the having, or whose friendship is worth soliciting, but I must have both *your* good opinion and your friendship."

Mr Gowans was silent, his natural modesty rendering him not very apt in replying to a compli-

ment. "You must," pursued the Colonel, "take charge of my affairs. What cursed lies that fellow Bland made me believe; but let him and his precious son-in-law, Sir James Inglis, go, as they are going, to the devil as fast as they can. But I won't put myself in a passion just now about them. But, as I was saying, you must look into my concerns; they are in confusion, I fear, and want arranging. I am not in debt though; don't mistake me,—I don't intend to become bankrupt. By good luck my money was snug, when Bland came down with such a crash. The scoundrel, however, is carrying his head as high as ever, and braving it out with all the impudence imaginable. But what the deuce tempts me to mention his name, and drive all the blood up to my head?" And as he spoke the Colonel's face became like that of a man in an apoplexy.

Mr Gowans attempted no remark, and after a short pause, the Colonel began again.

"Mr Gowans," said he composedly, "I have no children, and my heirs are those I could see at the mischief; and I would rather sink my money in the bottom of the sea, than let one of them put a hand on it. I owe you reparation for an injury, and what is more, I owe your wife something. Her father Major Woodburn was as brave an officer as ever lived. He would have risen to great eminence had he been spared; but, poor fellow, he met with an early but honourable death. I knew him well; I owe the life I now possess to him. He saved me, when I would inevitably have fallen a sacrifice to my own rashness, and on an occasion, too, when I should richly have deserved it. I had engaged in some wild prank, not much to my credit, I can assure you. I need not now tell the particulars; but I exposed

myself to danger in a situation where I ought not to have been. A bomb-shell would have shaved off my head, had he not, at the peril of his own life, dragged me away a moment before, while he was foaming with rage, and cursing his interference. I have no heir of my own, as I told you already," added the Colonel to his astonished companion; "*you* will soon have one, and *it* shall inherit my fortune."

"Stop, dear sir," interposed Mr Gowans, "this will never do. Too much prosperity is a dangerous thing. It is, indeed, a very great snare."

"Nay," replied the Colonel, "I don't mean to give *you* a farthing of my money; and it can't hurt the infant yet unborn to be talking between ourselves of the future provision we mean to make for it. It must be brought up without knowing a word of this matter. It sha'n't hear a word of it from *me*. It may take my name when it enters on its kingdom, but I do not impose that as a condition. Now, let all this be a dead secret between *us* two. No, you must tell your wife about it. Tell her that her father was my friend, and that I owe the preservation of my life to him, and it is the least I can do for her,—nay, it is but a small affair after all,—to bestow my goods and chattels upon his descendant, when the time comes that I sha'n't want them myself."

A summons from the breakfast bell put an end, for the present, to farther discourse on this interesting subject; and Mr Gowans felt more disposed, as they proceeded to the house, to ponder in his own mind on what had passed, than to make any reply to the remarkable intimation that had just been made to him.

CHAPTER XLV.

Happy the man who sees a God employed
 In all the good and ill that checker life!
 Resolving all events, with their effects
 And manifold results," * * *

* * * * *
 COWPER.

Mr and Mrs Gowans having prolonged their stay for some days more, were at length reluctantly allowed to depart from Ingliston, having formed an intimacy and a friendship with its new proprietor and his family which was likely to be permanent, and, indeed, a source of mutually increasing satisfaction and pleasure to all parties, as those intimacies are,—and only those,—which are formed upon a right basis.

On the day after their return to Glasgow, Mrs Gowans, who was considerably fatigued with her journey, was reclining on a sofa in her own apartment, when she requested Miss Stirling, who was going out, to send Mrs Kirke to sit beside her in her absence, as she had a great deal to tell her about their new and excellent friends whom they had just left. Mrs Kirke was delighted with the summons to attend, and, humbly requesting permission to knit her stocking, as she did not like to sit unemployed, she took her station in an arm-chair, near Mrs Gowans.

"I have a great deal more to tell you," said Mrs Gowans, after they had conversed for a while: "but,

as I feel rather fatigued, *you* must talk to me, and I will listen."

"Well, ma'am," replied Mrs Kirke, "you will think there is little variety in my discourse, for I am always on the same subject,—always harping, you will say, on the same string. But I must tell you an adventure I had the day before you came home; but, as it refers to our darling who is gone, I shall say nothing of it to your husband, for the mention of her name distresses him so much."

"You are quite right, dear Mrs Kirke," said Mrs Gowans, who, together with Mrs Kirke, often indulged in long discourses about Margaret Inglis, who was as fresh in the old woman's memory as at the day of her death; and her grave, which was the spot where Mrs Kirke herself hoped to rest, was the *ultima Thule* of her wishes in this world.

"You are right not to mention her to him," repeated Mrs Gowans. "She occupied a place in his early affections which I think nothing can supply; so we must do what we can to make him happy. It is ill our part to open up old wounds if we can avoid it; for I am sure he studies to make us all happy."

"And happy, happy he is himself, as he deserves to be," replied Mrs Kirke.

"Yes," said Mrs Gowans cheerfully, "I think *you* have the way of pleasing him. I am often inclined to be jealous."

"Really, ma'am, I think you have no cause," replied Mrs Kirke. "As long as he was a bachelor, I had some chance of pleasing him; but now that he has got a wife who seems all the world to *him*, I often think to myself that poor Miss Stirling and I are two people too many in the house."

"Well," said Mrs Gowans, "I must send *you* away to Ingliston; only I fear you would make jealousy between Colonel Dempster and his wife. Lady Anne said you must come to stay with them."

"Nay," said Mrs Kirke seriously, "the lady is very good, but I cannot go; I really cannot go."

"Indeed," replied Mrs Gowans, "I told her we could not part with *you* ourselves."

"The truth is," resumed Mrs Kirke, "an old person like me is not fit for journeys or paying visits. I should like, no doubt, to see Ingliston, a place of which I have heard so much; but if I were to be called away to my last home, when there, to what trouble it would put Mr Gowans to fulfil his promise of laying me in his own burying-place!"

"But what were you going to tell me about?" said Mrs Gowans, wishing to change the subject.

"The night before last," replied Mrs Kirke, "the evening was so inviting, I went to take a walk, and to view the spot where I am to sleep ere long. The sun was bright, and its rays were sloping down in their full strength on the silent graves. The birds were singing with extravagant joy, and I was thinking of another world where there is eternal sunshine, and I had almost forgotten that sin and sorrow were in this, when a gentleman, tall and sad-looking, came up to me, and said, 'Good woman, do you know the place where the family burying-ground of one Mr Gowans is?'"

"Yes, sir, said I, there is the very place, I will lead you to it; and I led him by the little path till I came to the tombstone, which I pointed out to him. Immediately he took out of his purse a guinea, and said, I thank you, good woman, I will

not detain you. And I said to him, No, sir, it would be nothing but covetousness in me to take that money. And I told him I had all the comforts life could afford. Upon which he said, Give it then to some one who needs it. You may know a more deserving person than I do. So, ma'am, I took the money, and as I was putting it up safely in my little pocket-book, his eye glanced at the inscriptions on the tombstone, first, the names of Mr Gowans's parents, and underneath their names he read, and he was all like one convulsed while he read, 'The mortal remains of Margaret Inglis are here laid, to rest in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection.'

"Ah! sir," said I, for I could not help speaking, "she was once a sufferer on earth, but she is now a saint in glory."

He started and looked round, for I suppose he thought I had gone away, and he looked like one taken by surprise; and he said something, I do not remember the exact words, but it was asking if I had been acquainted with her. Upon which I told him all that I knew of her. I could not forbear, he seemed so interested and so anxious to know, and he wept like an infant, and when I told him of her sending me to sell a small gold locket, a keepsake that she had, to save her and me from starving of hunger, he wrung his hands, and I thought he would have gone into a fit. But when I expressed my sorrow for having hurt his feelings by the detail, he suddenly tried to compose himself, and shaking me heartily by the hand, he walked hastily away, leaving me standing in astonishment, and I saw him no more.

"Now, ma'am, if it meets with your approbation,"

continued Mrs Kirke, "I propose to lay out the guinea in buying a dress and a bonnet, for Mrs Stalker; she is so faithful in her attendance at a place of worship, and her things are now very shabby. Have you any objections that I should do this? or is there any other person you think requires or deserves it more?"

"None," replied Mrs Gowans, "do as you propose; and, if there be not enough, I will add to it what you want. But who could the gentleman be?" added Mrs Gowans.

"It has just occurred to me," rejoined Mrs Kirke, "that it must have been her brother the Colonel."

"That is impossible," said Mrs Gowans. "We left him at Ingliston, and he never was an hour from home all the time we were there."

While they were thus conjecturing, Mr Gowans came in.

"Don't go away," said he to Mrs Kirke, who rose to leave the room on his entrance. "Don't go away. I am not going to remain. I have news which will please *you*, Mrs Kirke, as much as any body. Our worthy friend Mr Hume has got the church. There, Henrietta, read his letter to Mrs Kirke. Colonel Gilbert is waiting for me down stairs."

Mrs Gowans handed the letter to Mrs Kirke when Mr Gowans had left the room. "Your eyes," said she, "are as good as mine. Will you read that for me?"

Mrs Kirke wiped her spectacles, and in a very precise tone, read as follows:—

"My dear, kind Friends,—For I must address both you and Mrs Gowans on this occasion, to express

my sincere gratitude for all your favours, and especially for the interest you have taken in a concern in which, you will rejoice to hear, I have been successful. I have got the appointment, and I consider that I have entirely you both to thank as the instruments. Of course, the whole was in God's hands, and he alone could have made your kind endeavours on my behalf effectual. Sir Robert and Lady Burnett called upon me at my lodgings, and gave me the presentation in the most handsome manner. Lady Burnett presented me at the same time with a gold watch from herself. I had preached at — several times upon trial, and Sir Robert said I was acceptable to the people there. Indeed, said he, if you had not been so, no motive of private friendship could have made me appoint you to the living. My good friends, you will rejoice at my good fortune. I know not how prosperity will suit with me, for I have had so little of it in the course of my life. But I hope I may be strengthened to do my duty in the new sphere of labour in which I am to be placed, as I think I have endeavoured to do it in the humble line I have hitherto occupied as a probationer and as a missionary among the poor, which at least was as responsible and important in the sight of God, if not as respectable in the eyes of the world, as that of a placed parish minister. I ask of you, my dear friends, to give me your prayers, that I may be a faithful minister over this people.

“ Best respects to your worthy aunt Miss Stirling ; and your venerable friend Mrs Kirke, I do not forget. Tell her to pray for me.—Yours, my beloved friends,

ALEX. HUMR.”

NOTE.—The reader may be informed that Miss Mundell is now mistress of a fine estate in East-Lothian ; and she is mistress of it by marriage, not by purchase, and has acquired a title into the bargain, for she is no other than the above Lady Burnett.

It was through Mr and Mrs Gowans's interest with her, that Mr Hume, soon after her marriage, was presented to one of the best livings in the church of Scotland ; and as it is a fact borne out by constant experience, that in the days of people's prosperity, even their defects become as so many beauties in the eyes of the world, so Mr Hume's natural awkwardness is now called fine apostolical simplicity, his blunt address passes for unaffected dignity, and his roughness of manner in the pulpit is accounted the true John Knox style of preaching.

The people of Edinburgh are casting a sheep's eye towards him, but he prefers the substantial comfort, sincere respect, and the tried friendship of his flock, which he possesses, to frothy honours and transient fits of applause and admiration from a fluctuating intellectual mob, and he has resolved to live and die among a people in whose hearts he has established a lodgement, on account of his sterling virtues, his sound principles, and his unblamable practice.

THE END.

